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**ALL-NEW
ADVENTURE
BY:**

**BRETT
BREEDING**

**MIKE
MIGNOLA**

**JERRY
ORDWAY**

**GEORGE
PÉREZ**

**JOHN
STATEMA**

**ROGER
STERN**

**CURT
SWAN**

REVEALING
A **SECRET** OF
SUPERMAN'S
PAST!

AND NEW
WHO'S WHO
ENTRIES



PÉREZ • ORDWAY

MEMORIES OF KRYPTONS PAST

presented by:

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 letterer • colorist • asst. editor • el grande honcho

SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER

THE PRISON PLANET LIES IN THE VAST SHADOW OF WARWORLD, THE SEAT OF POWER FOR THIS GALAXY.

WARWORLD'S RULER IS PRESENT TO GREET THE SLAVE SHIP AND INSPECT ITS CARGO...



NOT ALL THE SHIP'S OCCUPANTS ARE DESTINED FOR SLAVERY...

...SOME ARE SOUGHT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GAMES-- A GLADIATORIAL COMPETITION HELD EACH CYCLE TO AMUSE THE UPPER CLASS.



THIS ONE IS OF KEEN INTEREST TO THE RULER OF WARWORLD...

HE EXHUES AN AURA OF GREATNESSES AND GLORIES PAST...



...BUT MOSTLY BECAUSE HE'S FIFTY!





FEIST INTERESTS
MONGUL, EMPEROR
OF WARWORLD.

(MAJESTY—
ALLOW ME TO—)

(SAVE YOUR
ENERGIES FOR
THE GAME,
GLADIATOR.)

(ADDRESS
ME AGAIN AND
I'LL HAVE YOUR
TONGUE!)



STILL, FEIST MUST BE KEPT
IN ITS PLACE



(BRING HIM
FORTH!)

(HE KILLED
KAARAL TO
GET AT THE
BLUE ONE...)

(SHHH...)



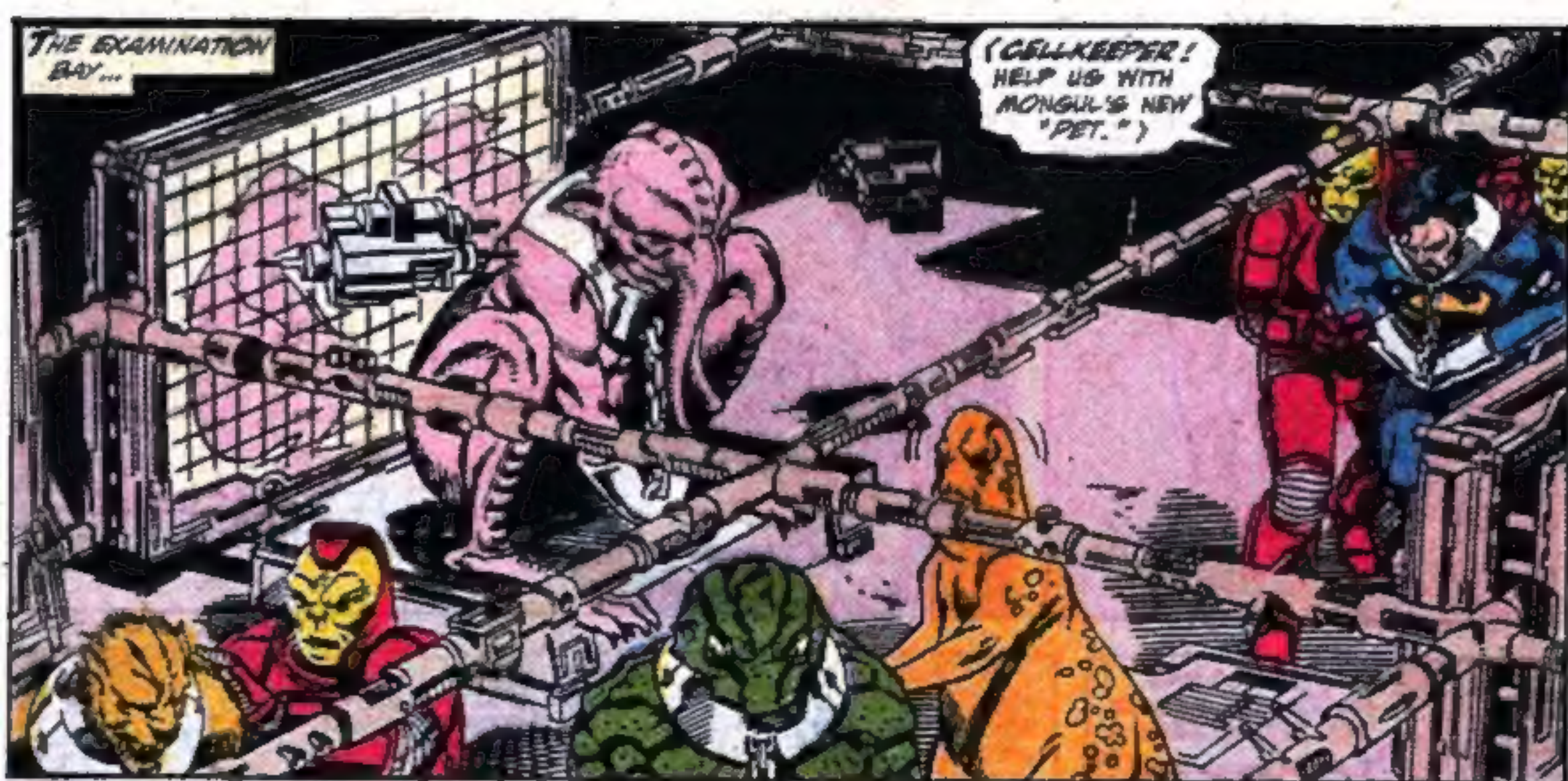
(SEE THAT
HE IS READY
FOR THE FIRST
GAME.)



(DRAAGA HASN'T
HAD A GOOD
CHALLENGE FOR
MANY CYCLES
NOW.)

(TAKE ME
BACK TO
WARWORLD,
LADDER!)

**THE EXAMINATION
DAY...**



(CELLKEEPER!
HELP US WITH
MONGUL'S NEW
"PET.")



(I'D LAY ODDS
HE'LL NEVER
MAKE IT THROUGH
THE FIRST
CHALLENGE!)

(THE OTHER
GLADIATORS
ARE BIGGER,
STRONGER...)

(HE'S USED
UP ALL HIS ENER-
GIES FIGHTING
US!)

(WHERE'S
HE FROM?)

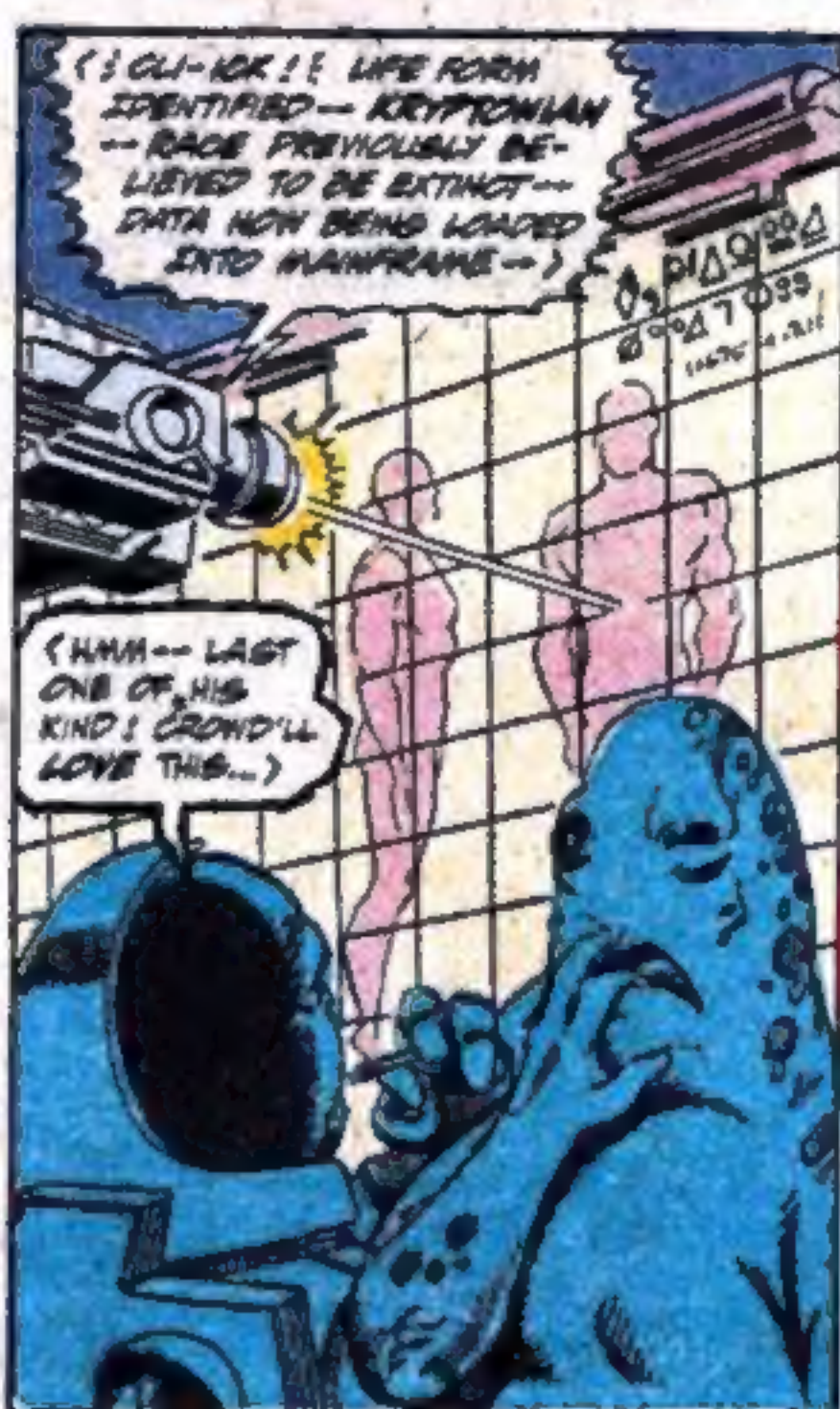


(SLAVE SHIP FOUND HIM
IN SPACE, THOUGHT HE WAS
DEAD, AND THEY PULLED HIM
IN TO SEARCH THE BODY FOR
VARIABLES...)

(SO ONCE
INSIDE HE REVIVES
AND STARTS
FIGHTING, *
AND HE'S
BEEN AT IT
SINCE!)

(I DON'T
SEE WHAT'S SO
SPECIAL...)

* ADVENTURES OF
SUPERMAN # 454.



(GLI-ICK!! LIFE FORM
IDENTIFIED-- KRYPTONIAN
-- RACE PREVIOUSLY BE-
LIEVED TO BE EXTINCT--
DATA NOW BEING LOADED
INTO MAINFRAME--)

(HMM-- LAST
ONE OF HIS
KIND! CROWD'LL
LOVE THIS...)



(TAKE HIM TO A
CUBICLE. I'LL HAVE AN
ATTENDANT SENT TO
PRIME HIM FOR THE
START OF THE
COMPETITION.)



THE SHUTTLE-CRUISER SKIMS ALONG THE STAR-LADEN BLACKNESS, AS IT HAS DONE SO MANY TIMES BEFORE.

FOR CELLKEEPERS, SUCH EXCURSIONS ARE ROUTINE. THE INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SATELLITE PRISON ASTEROIDS ARE JUST PART OF THE JOB.

BUT, FOR CELLKEEPER 385, IT HAS BECOME SO MUCH MORE...

...ESPECIALLY TODAY.

(385 TO GLADIATOR ATTENDANT LENTRA. RESPOND ON FREQUENCY OPENED. REPLY.)

(385, IS THAT YOU? IT'S LENTRA.)

(WHY ARE YOU CALLING ON THIS CHANNEL? IT'S AGAINST REGULATIONS.)

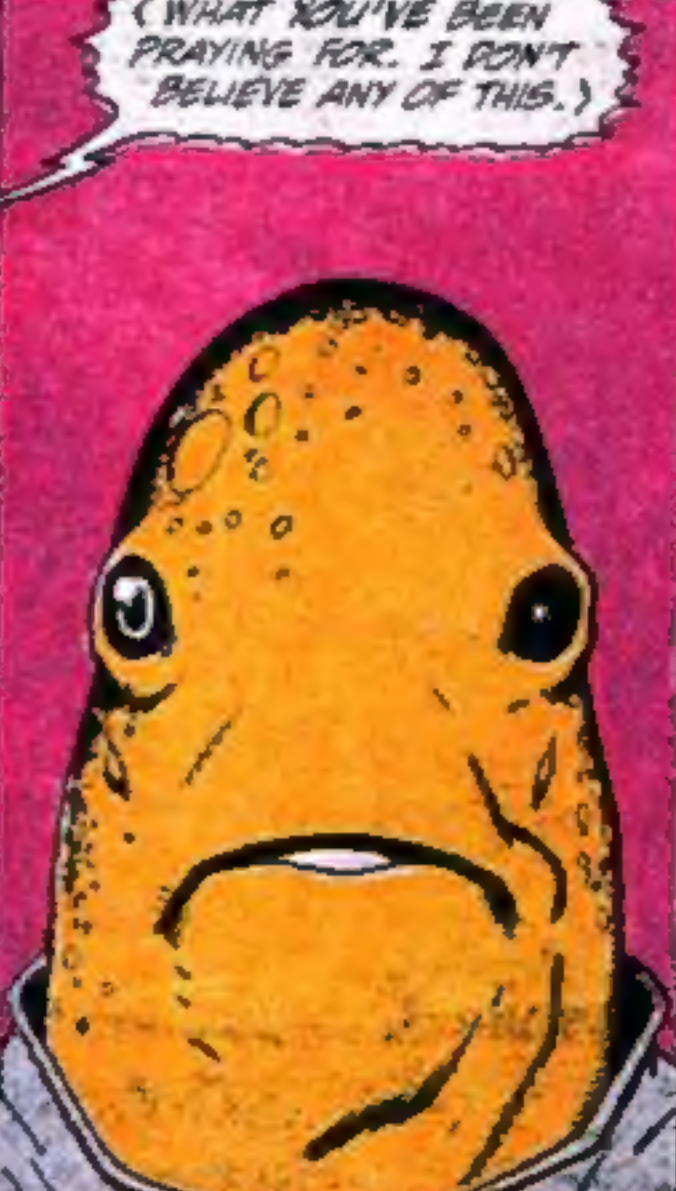
(I COULDN'T RISK USING THE MONITORED STATIONS.)

(IF WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE RED-CAPED ALIEN IS TRUE, THE OLD CLERIC MUST BE INFORMED.)



(PLEASE, LENTRA, YOU MUST ATTEND THE KRYPTONIAN.)

(THIS MAY BE THE SIGN WE'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR.)



(WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR. I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THIS.)



(BUT DON'T WORRY, 385. I'LL SEE TO THE ALIEN'S NEEDS FOR YOU.)

(LENTRA! REPLY! LENTRA!)

"(BLAST! I LOST HER. THE SUB-FREQUENCY IS NOT AS STRONG AS THE OFFICIAL CHANNELS.)"

"(WELL, NO MATTER. LENTRA WILL DO AS I ASK, EVEN IF SHE DOES FEAR MONGUL'S WRATH.)"

"(WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR TOO LONG.)"

"(AH / THERE IT IS!)"

"(DETENTION BLOCK 2.)"

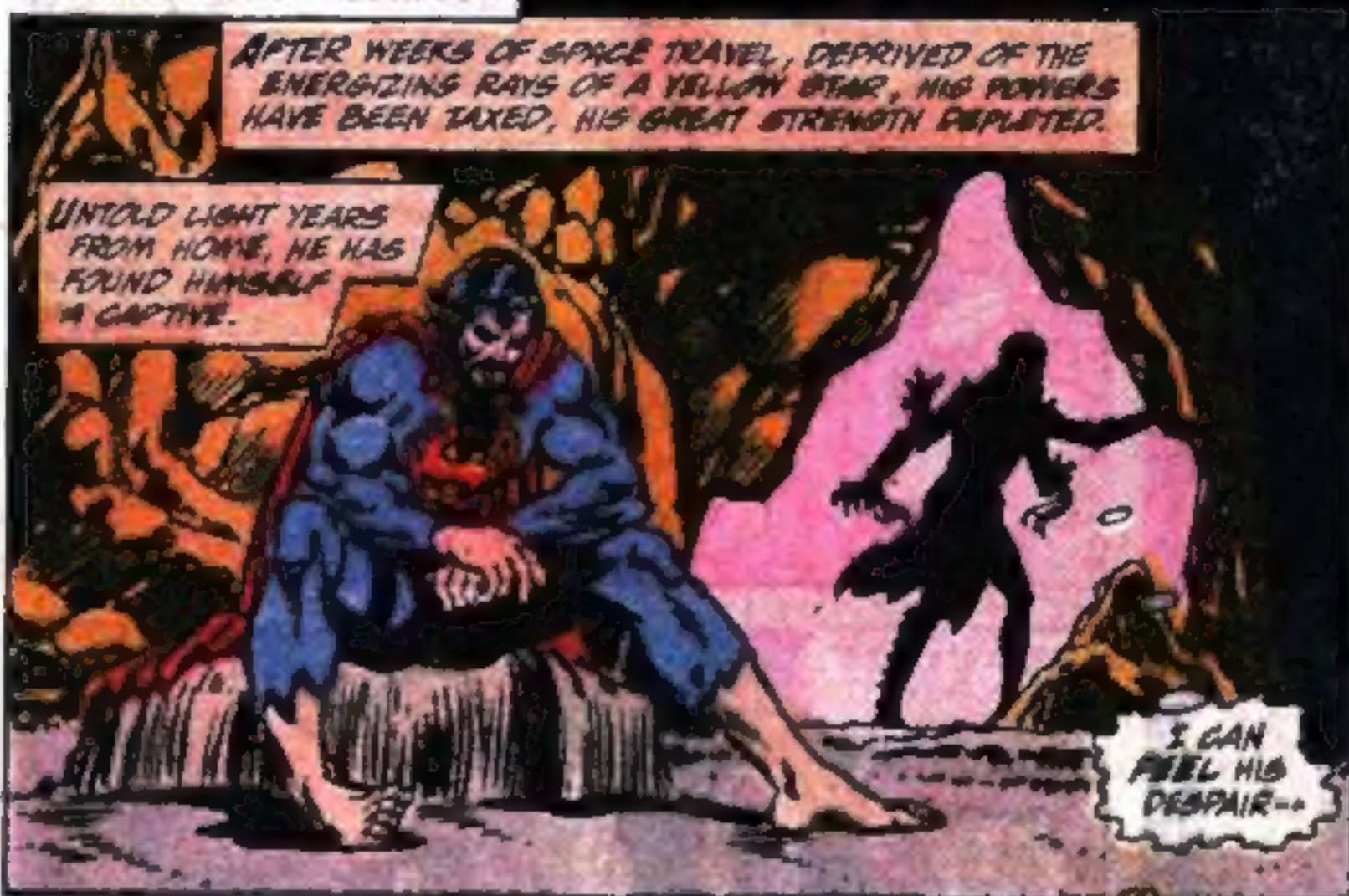
"(THE MOST REQUESTED OF ALL THE ISOLATION ASTEROIDS.)"

"(THE PARIAH PENITENTIARY.)"

IN THE CAVERNS OF THE PRISON PLANET, THE NEW ACQUISITION HAS SLOWLY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.

AFTER WEEKS OF SPACE TRAVEL, DEPRIVED OF THE ENERGIZING RAYS OF A YELLOW STAR, HIS POWERS HAVE BEEN TAXED, HIS GREAT STRENGTH DEPLETED.

UNTOLD LIGHT YEARS FROM HOME, HE HAS FOUND HIMSELF A CAPTIVE.



--HANGING ABOUT HIM LIKE A HEAVY CLOAK. WHAT IS THIS ONUS WHICH SO WEIGHS UPON HIM?

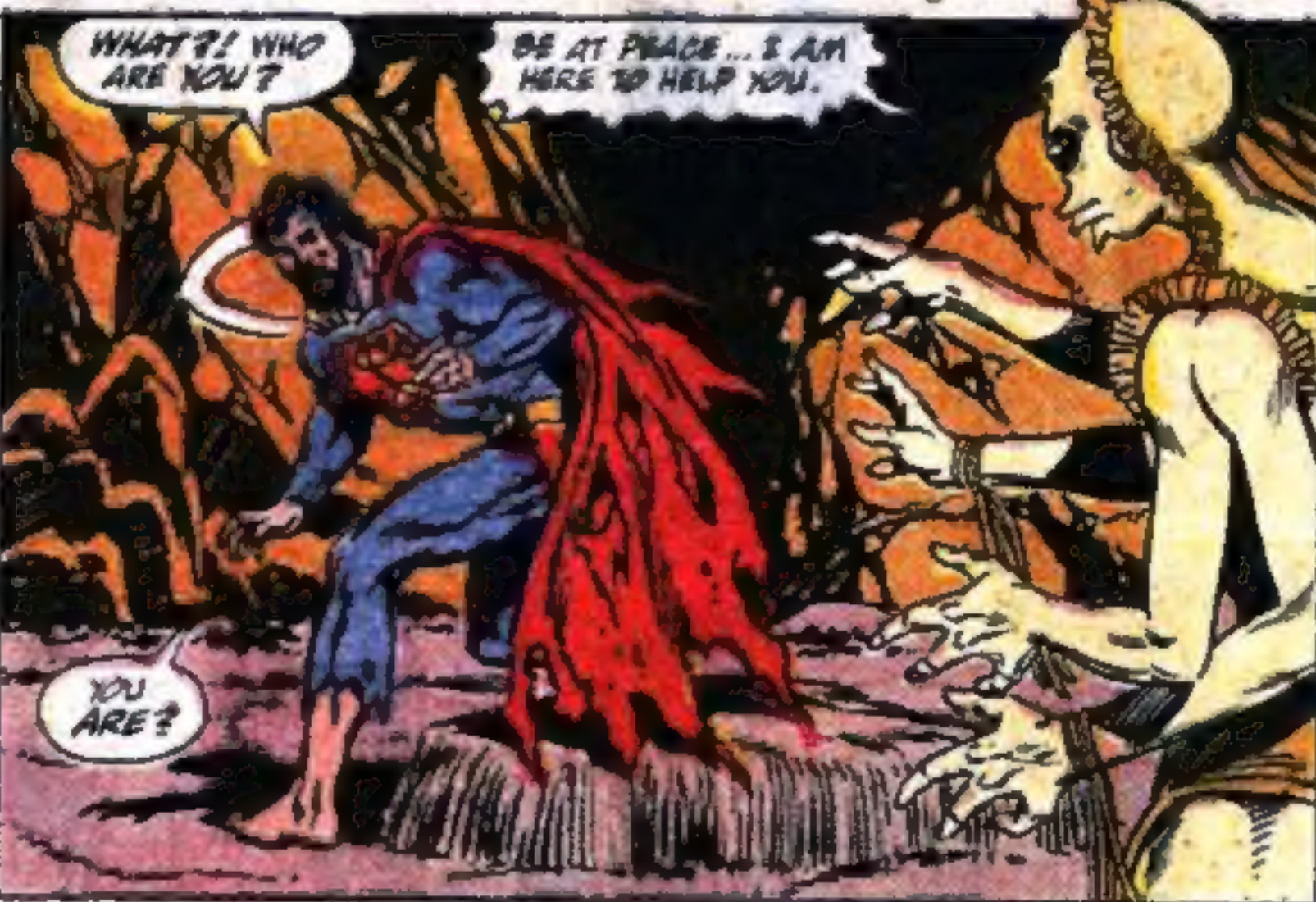
SALUTATIONS, MIGHTY WARRIOR...



WHAT?! WHO ARE YOU?

BE AT PEACE... I AM HERE TO HELP YOU.

YOU ARE?



YOU CAN HELP ME GET MY TELEPORT GEAR BACK... AND ESCAPE THIS WORLD?



ESCAPE?

I AM HERE TO PREPARE YOU FOR THE GAMES OF EMPEROR MONGUL! ONLY BY SURVIVING THE GAMES MAY A GLADIATOR WIN FREEDOM.

YOU WERE NOT TOLD--?



NO.

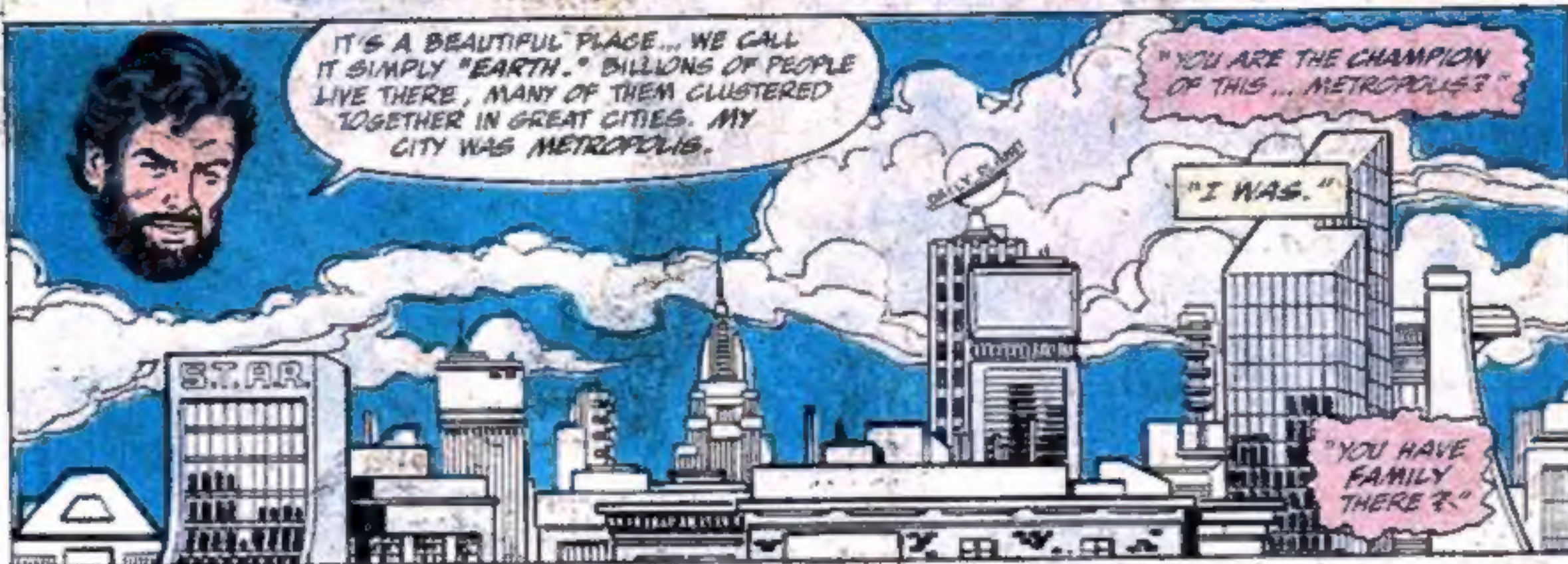
MY CHOICES THEN ARE TO FIGHT OR DIE?



I... GAVE THEM A LITTLE TROUBLE.

WELL, DESPAIR NO MORE...





"MY FAMILY LIVES ON A FARM, HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM THE CITY. THAT'S WHERE I WAS BORN."



"MY PARENTS ARE HARD-WORKING SMALL-TOWN FOLK... BUT THEY WERE NEVER SMALL-MINDED. THEY ALWAYS ENCOURAGED ME TO THINK BEYOND THE CONFINES OF THE FARM."

"I WONDER WHAT DAY IT IS BACK HOME?"

"IF IT'S SUNDAY, I IMAGINE THAT MA AND PA WILL BE SITTING DOWN TO AN EARLY DINNER WITH THE NEW FOSTER CHILD THEY'VE TAKEN IN."



"IF I KNOW MA, SHE'LL HAVE INVITED LANA LANG OVER, TOO. I CAN ALMOST TASTE THE CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS."



"I HOPE THEY'RE ALL WELL. THEY'RE SO VERY FAR AWAY... AND I MISS THEM ALL SO VERY MUCH."



"YOUR WORLD SOUNDS SO PLEASANT. WHY DID YOU LEAVE IT?"

"THAT'S... A LONG STORY."

"LET'S JUST SAY I THOUGHT IT BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED THAT I GO OFF-PLANET."

"HEY! BRING BACK MY CAPE!!"



"MA SAID TO WEAR IT... WHEREVER I GO."



MEANWHILE, IN
DETENTION
BLOCK Z...

(STRANGE. I
THOUGHT I'D BE REALLY
NERVOUS ABOUT THIS. THE
OLD CLERIC USUALLY HAS
THE KNACK FOR DIS-
COMBOBULATING MY
INNARDS.)

(MAYBE IT'S
BECAUSE, FOR ONCE,
IT IS I WHO HAVE
SOMETHING TO
TEACH HIM.)

(BRRR.
THAT FAMILIAR
CHILL IN MY
MEMBRANES.)

(HE KNOWS
I'M HERE.)

(385, WHY DO YOU
COME TO BOTHER
ME NOW?)

(I'VE TOLD YOU
REPEATEDLY,
MY TIME FOR
PREACHING
IS PAST.)

(BUT
CLERIC, I HAVE
SEEN A WONDROUS
SIGHT! ONE THAT
I MUST SHARE
WITH YOU!)

(I DO NOT CARE. SIGHTS OF
WONDER ARE FOR THOSE
WHO CARE TO SEE.)

(I JUST WANT TO
BE LEFT ALONE.)

(HOLY ONE, NO ONE RESPECTS
YOUR WISHES MORE THAN I,
BUT I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO
DECAY HERE ANY LONGER.)

(NOT WHEN
THE ANSWER TO
YOUR PRAYERS
AWAITS WITHIN
THE DARK
RECESSES OF
WARWORLD.)

(YOU SPEAK IN RIDDLES,
CELLKEEPER. AND I FIND
RIDDLES TIRESOME.)

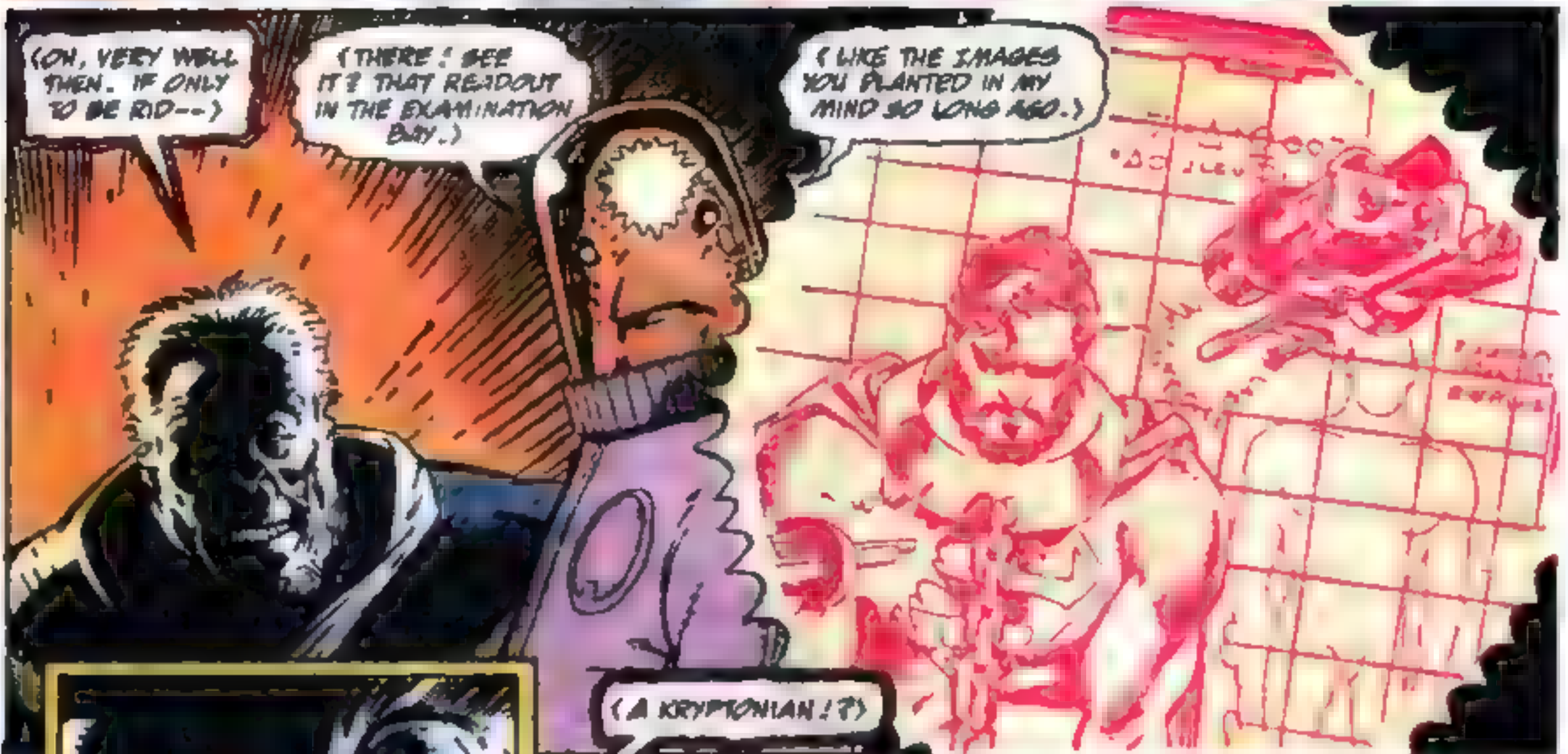
(IF YOU HAVE
SOMETHING TO
SAY, SAY IT.)

(ELSE,
TURN FROM
ME, AND
RETURN
NO MORE.)



(WITH DUE RESPECT, CLERIC, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE MY WORDS...)

(BUT IF YOU WITNESSED THROUGH MY MIND'S EYES AND SEE WHAT I'VE BEEN...)



(OH, VERY WELL THEN... IF ONLY TO BE RID--)

(THERE! SEE IT? THAT REDOUT IN THE EXAMINATION BURY...)

(LIKE THE IMAGES YOU PLANTED IN MY MIND SO LONG AGO...)

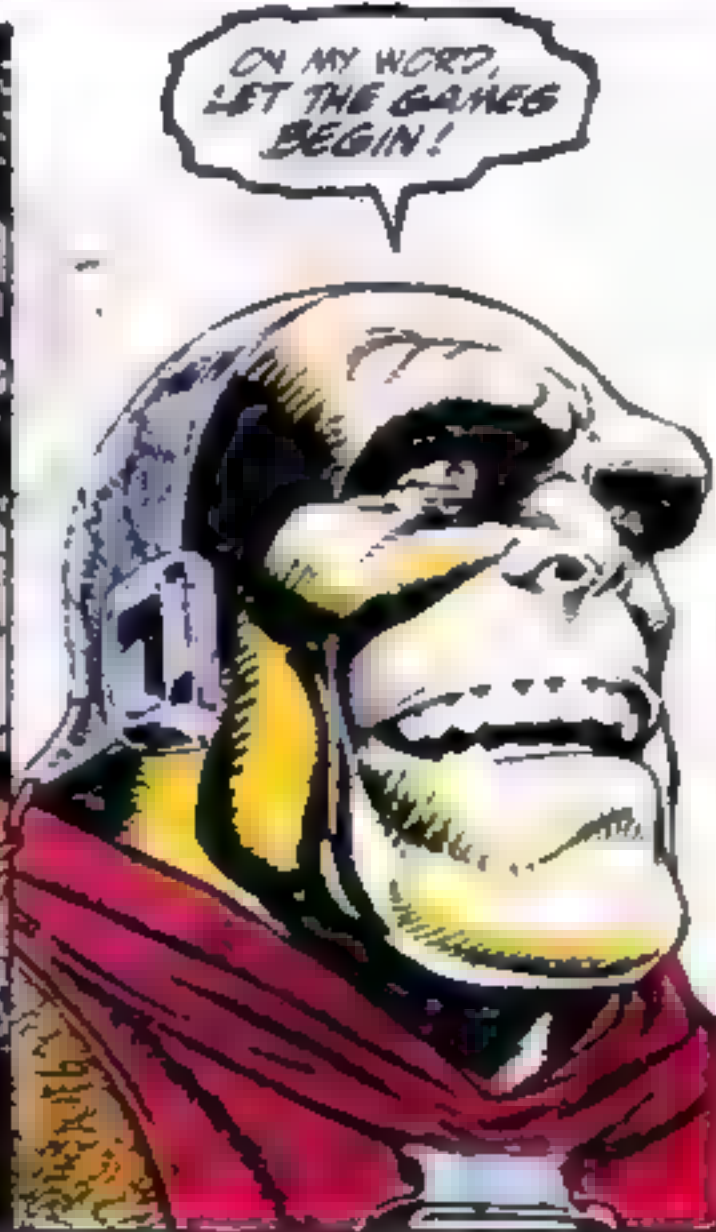
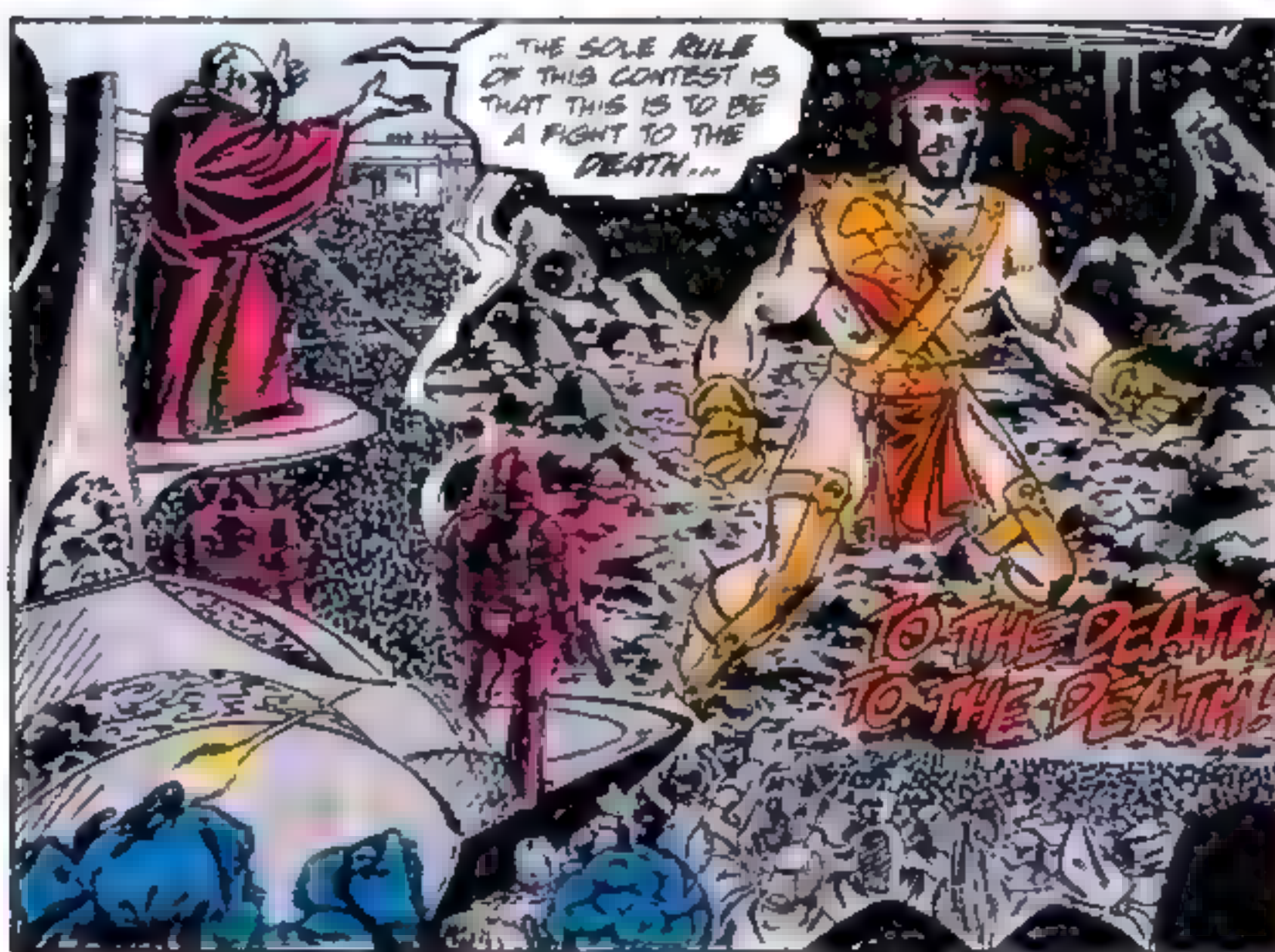
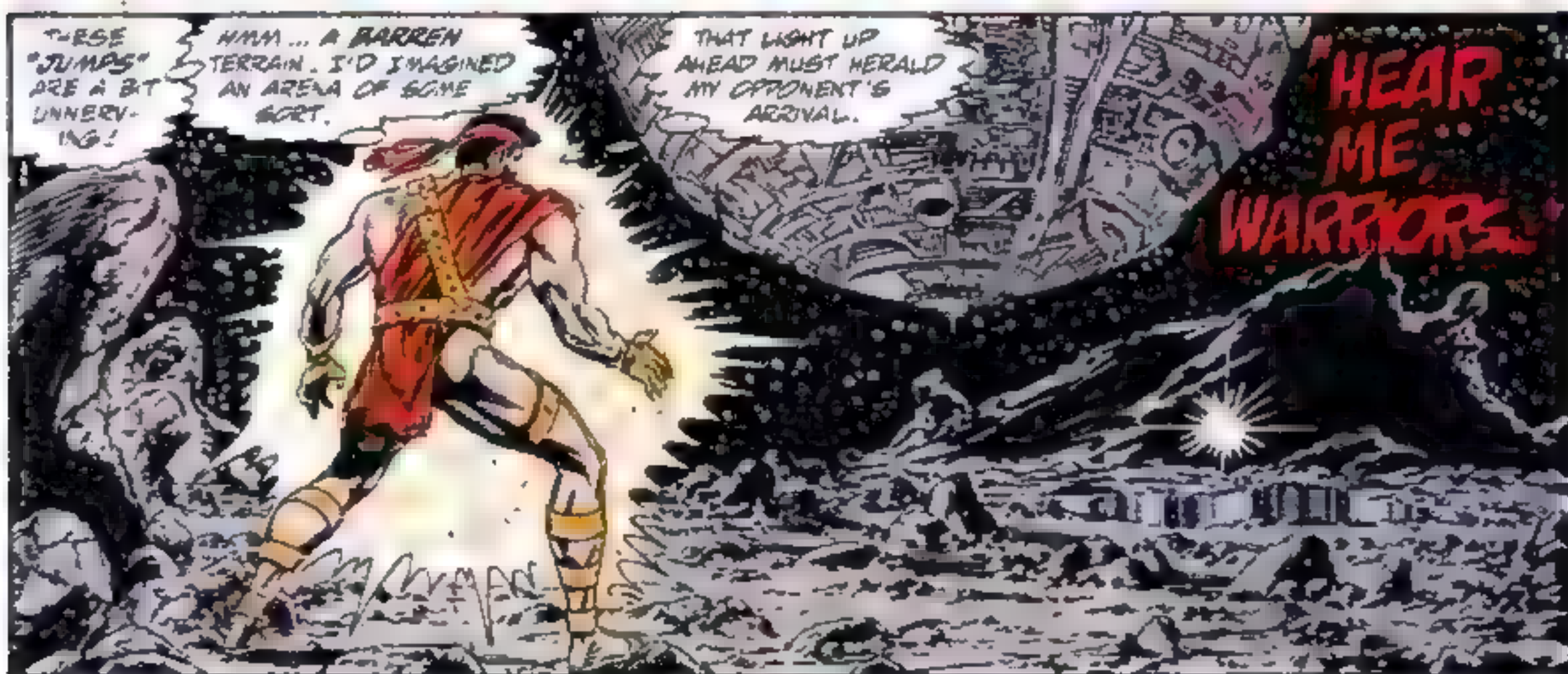
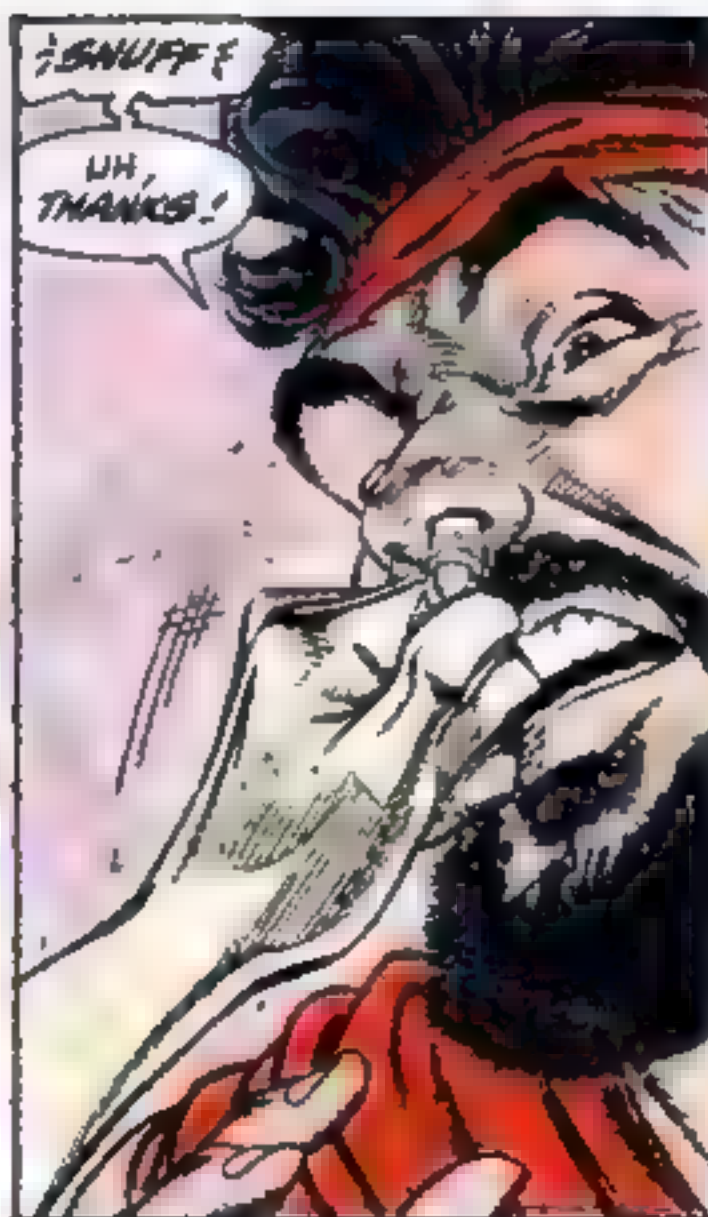
(A KRYPTONIAN!?)

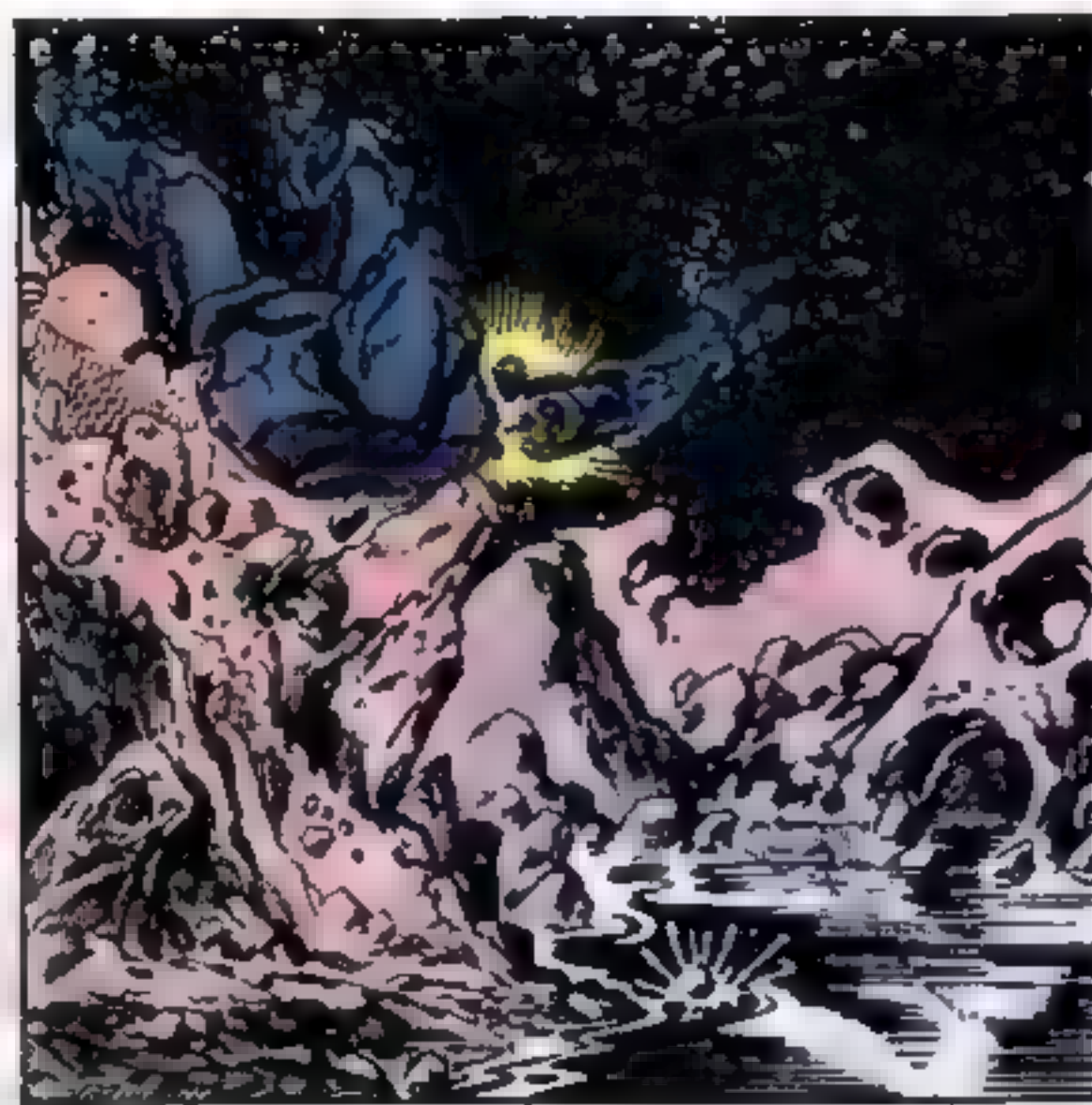
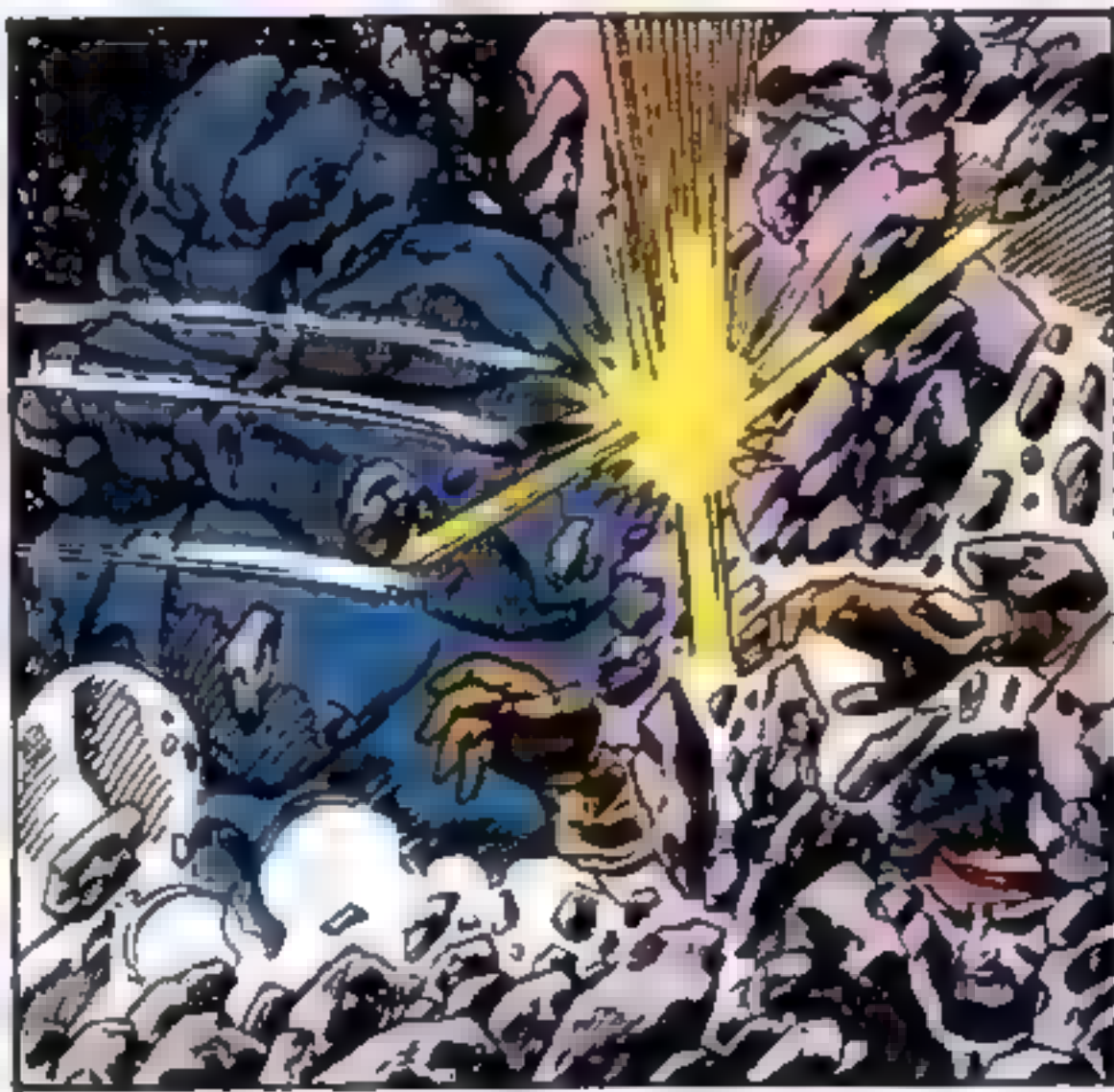
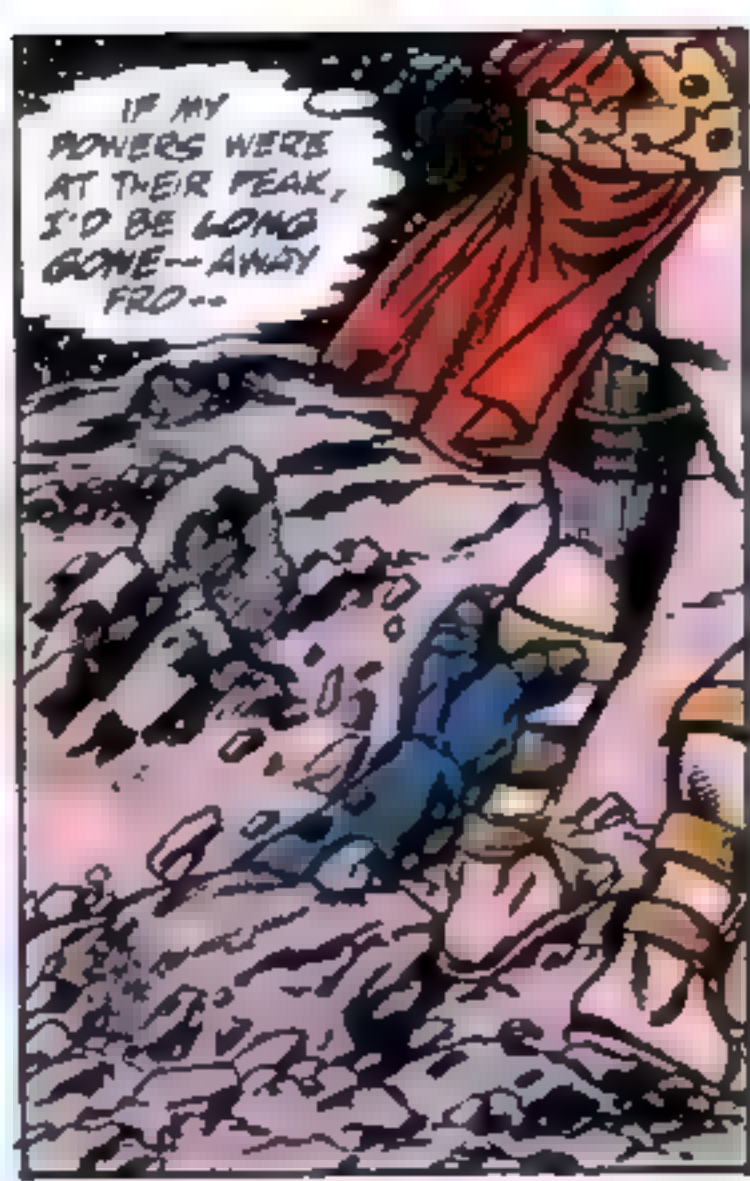
(NO! IT CAN'T BE!)

(IT IS A TRICK! A PLOT TO DRIVE ME MAD!)

(NO KRYPTONIAN CAN STILL BE ALIVE! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!)

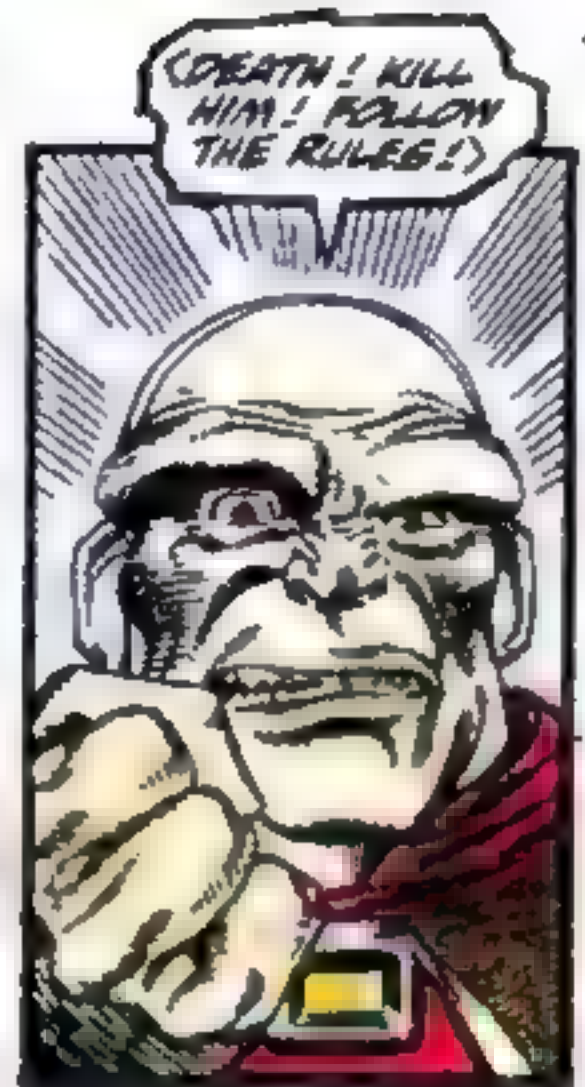
(THEY'RE DEAD! THEY ARE ALL DEAD!!)







DON'T WORRY, FELLA. I WON'T LET YOU FALL INTO THAT!



(DEATH! KILL HIM! FOLLOW THE RULES!)



NO! HE'S SUFFERED ENOUGH FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT!

THERE WILL BE NO BLOOD ON MY HANDS!

(YOU HAVE BESTED ME... NOW KILL ME...)

(...IT IS THE WAY OF THE GAMES!)



"I DON'T CARE! I'M CHANGING THE RULES!"

(KILL THEM BOTH!)

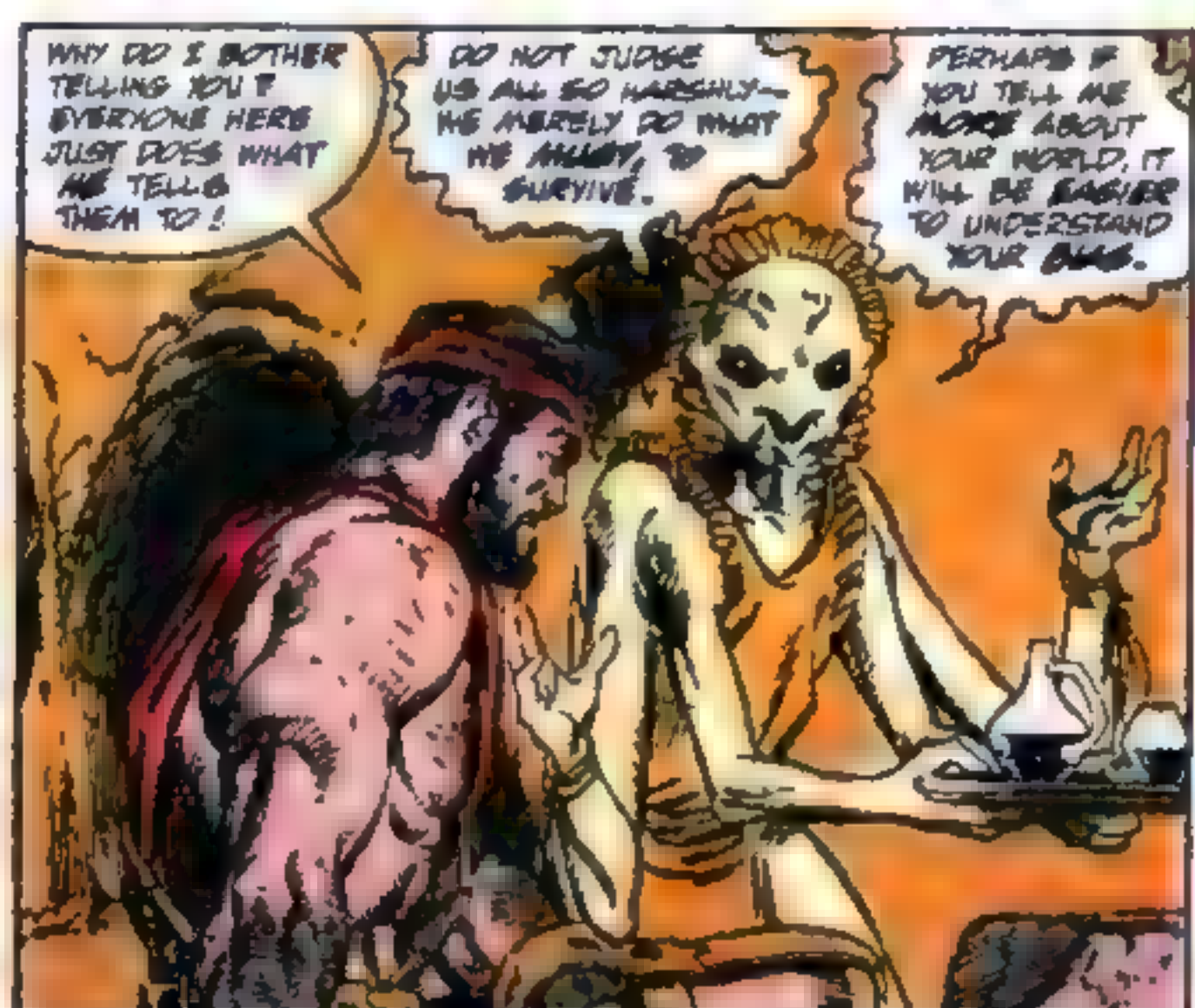
(THIS WEAKNESS WILL DOOM HIM IN THE NEXT CONTEST!)



I'M BACK!

YOU ARE HERE TO REST UP FOR THE NEXT PHASE.

NEXT PHASE? I HATE! CAN'T ADD! THERE'S JUST NO WAY HOW CAN I FORCE ME!



WHY DO I BOTHER TELLING YOU? EVERYONE HERE JUST DOES WHAT HE TELLS THEM TO!

DO NOT JUDGE US ALL SO HARSHLY—HE MERELY DO WHAT HE MUST, TO SURVIVE.

PERHAPS IF YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR WORLD, IT WILL BE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN.

THE ANALYZERS IDENTIFIED YOUR ORIGINS AS KRYPTONIAN, YET YOU CALLED YOUR WORLD "EARTH" -- AND I SENSED NO DECEPTION ON YOUR PART. I AM PUZZLED.

I'M NOT SURPRISED.

I WAS BORN ON EARTH AND LIVED THERE FOR OVER A QUARTER-CENTURY BEFORE I DISCOVERED THAT MY BLOODLINE WAS OF ANOTHER WORLD.

I WAS HOME FOR A VISIT TO MY PARENTS' FARM --

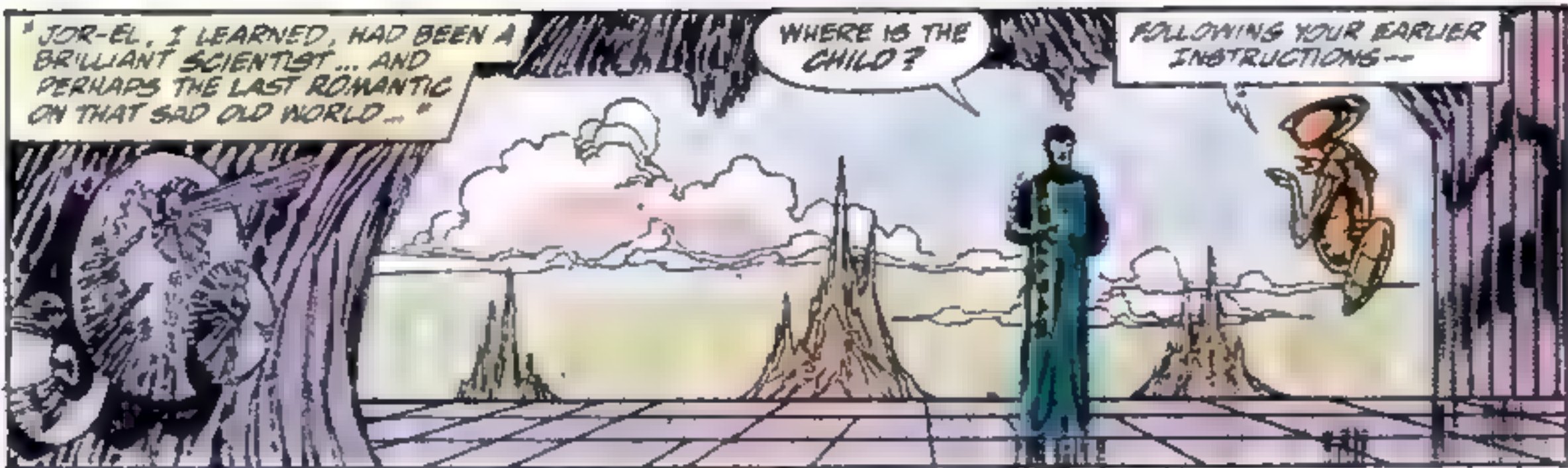
"-- WHEN I FIRST LEARNED OF MY NATURAL FATHER --"

MY SON... BE SILENT... AND LEARN!

"HE WAS A MANIFESTATION OF... A SORT OF ELECTRO-PHONIC RECORDING -- A MESSAGE FROM A FATHER I'D NEVER KNOWN, A MAN NAMED JAR-EL."

"IN A MATTER OF SECONDS, MY MIND WAS OVERWHELMED BY A BURST OF DATA -- A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES FROM THE LONG-DEAD WORLD OF KRYPTON."

"HE APPEARED LIKE A GHOST ON THE PRAIRIE, BUT THERE WAS MORE TO HIM THAN JUST LIGHT AND SOUND."



"JOR-EL, I LEARNED, HAD BEEN A BRILLIANT SCIENTIST... AND PERHAPS THE LAST ROMANTIC ON THAT SAD OLD WORLD..."

WHERE IS THE CHILD?

FOLLOWING YOUR EARLIER INSTRUCTIONS--



"--I HAVE PLACED THE MATRIX IN THE THIRD LEVEL LABORATORY, SIRE."

MY... SON...

JOR-EL!! THEN IT IS TRUE...



...YOU REALLY SENT ONE OF YOUR SERVANTS TO REMOVE THE MATRIX FROM THE GESTATION CHAMBERS!

AM I NOT ENTITLED TO DO SO IF I WISH LARA? I AM THE CHILD'S FATHER. BY KRYPTONIAN LAW, I HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMOVE HIM.

YOU SPEAK OF A LAW THAT HAS NOT BEEN INVOKED FOR CENTURIES, JOR-EL-- WHY DO YOU INVOKE IT NOW? WAS THE TRAGEDY THAT BESETS OUR WORLD ROBBED YOU OF YOUR SANITY?



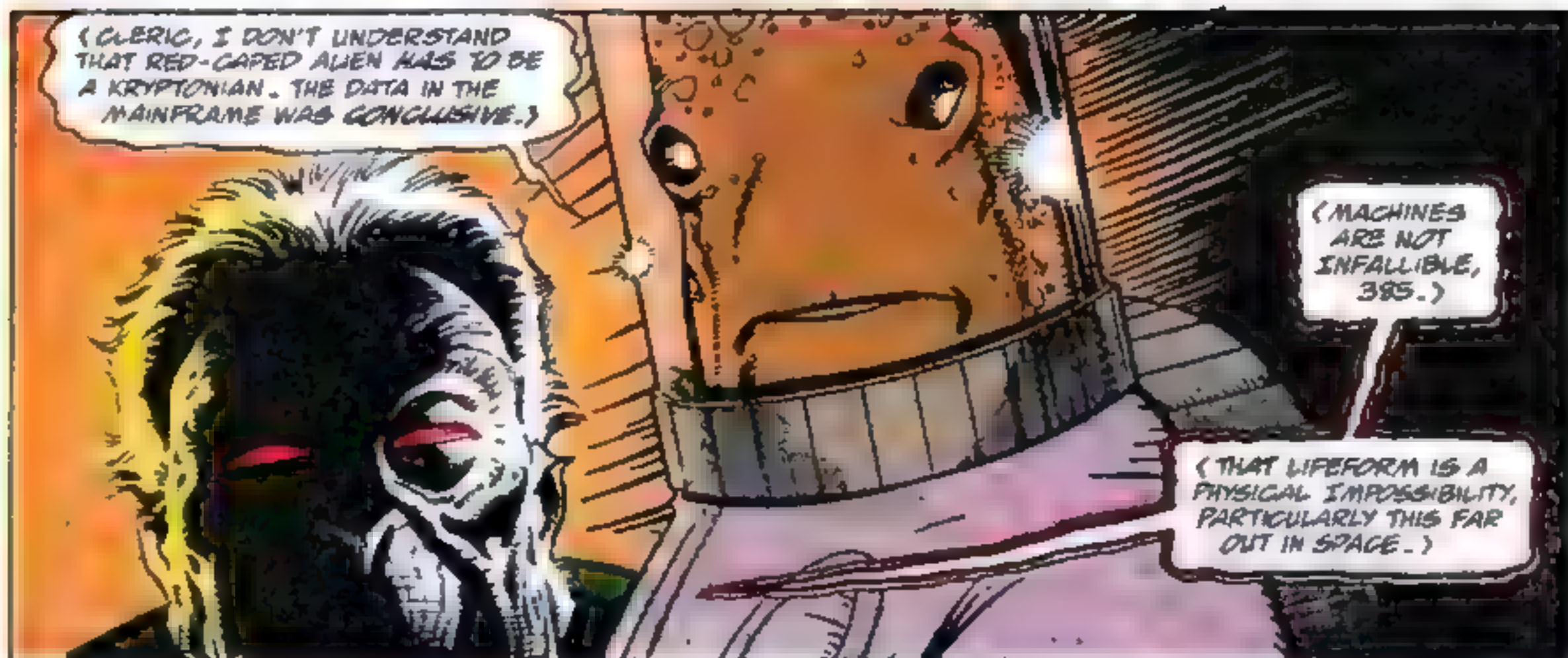
IS THIS WHY YOU ENDANGER THE LIFE OF OUR UNBORN CHILD?

"ENDANGER?" WHAT I MEAN TO DO WILL NOT ENDANGER HIM, LARA. HE WILL SURVIVE. LONG AFTER ALL OF KRYPTON IS A SHATTERED RUIN, OUR SON WILL SURVIVE!



JOR-EL AND LARA WERE MY GENETIC PARENTS.. THEY GAVE ME LIFE.

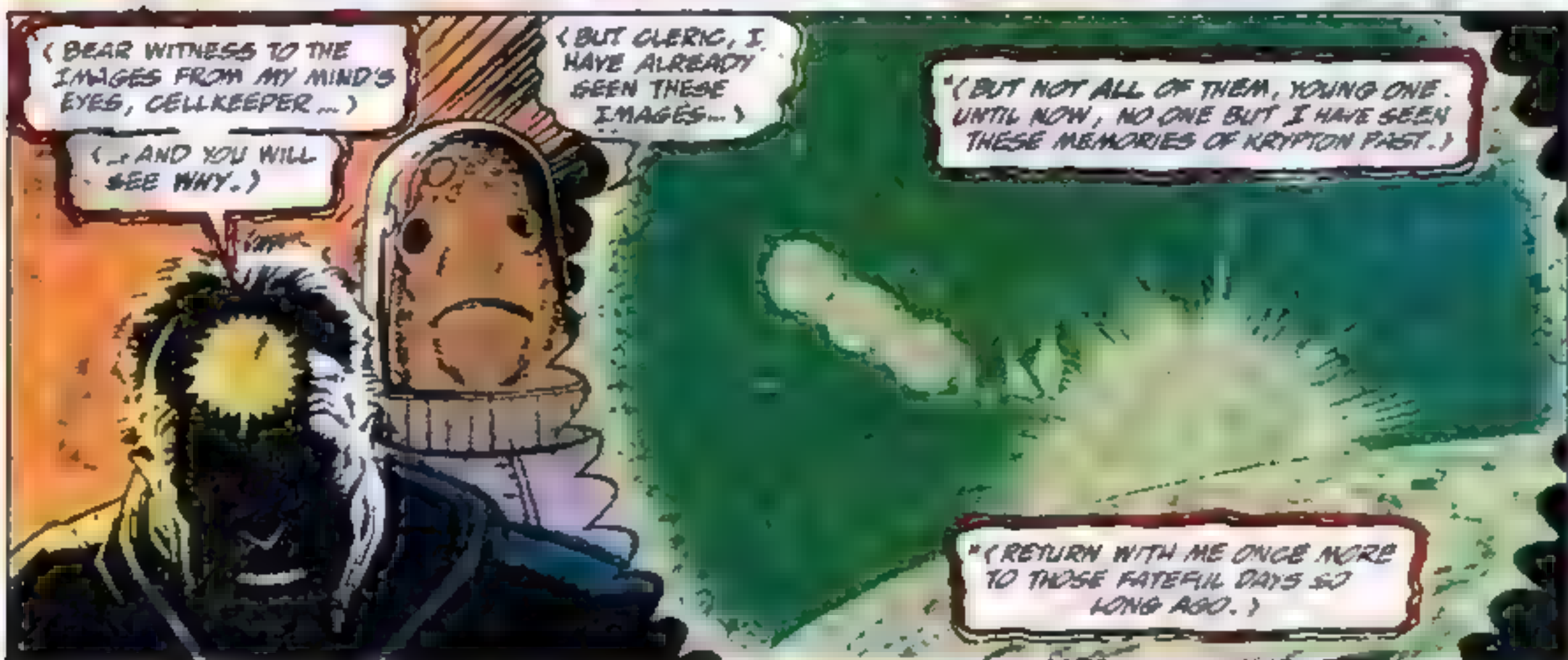
BUT MY EARTH PARENTS GAVE ME LOVE.



(CLERIC, I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT RED-CAPED ALIEN HAS TO BE A KRYPTONIAN. THE DATA IN THE MAINFRAME WAS CONCLUSIVE.)

(MACHINES ARE NOT INFALLIBLE, 395.)

(THAT LIFEFORM IS A PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY, PARTICULARLY THIS FAR OUT IN SPACE.)



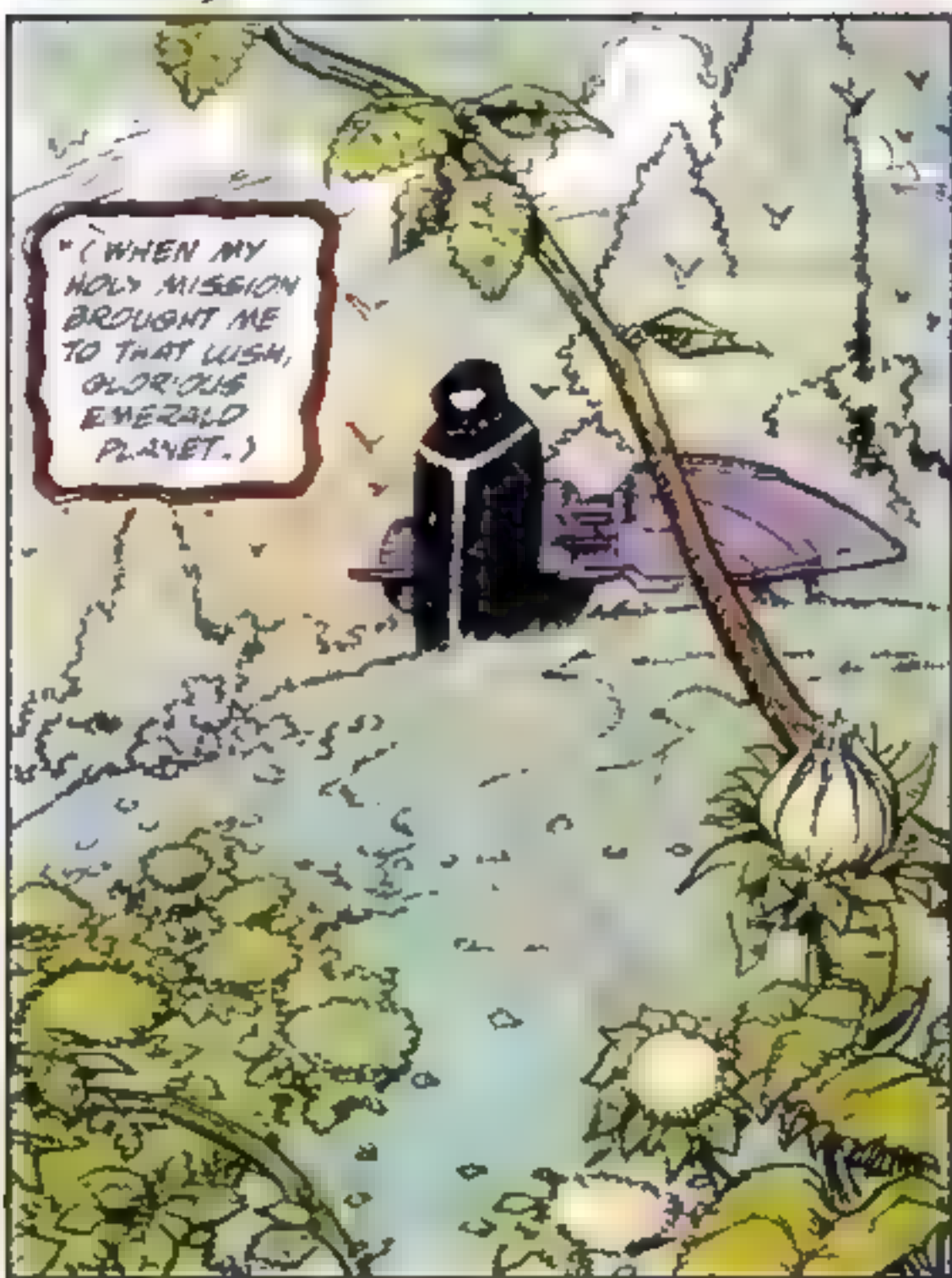
(BEAR WITNESS TO THE IMAGES FROM MY MIND'S EYES, CELLKEEPER...)

(...AND YOU WILL SEE WHY.)

(BUT CLERIC, I HAVE ALREADY SEEN THESE IMAGES...)

(BUT NOT ALL OF THEM, YOUNG ONE. UNTIL NOW, NO ONE BUT I HAVE SEEN THESE MEMORIES OF KRYPTON PAST.)

(RETURN WITH ME ONCE MORE TO THOSE FATEFUL DAYS SO LONG AGO.)



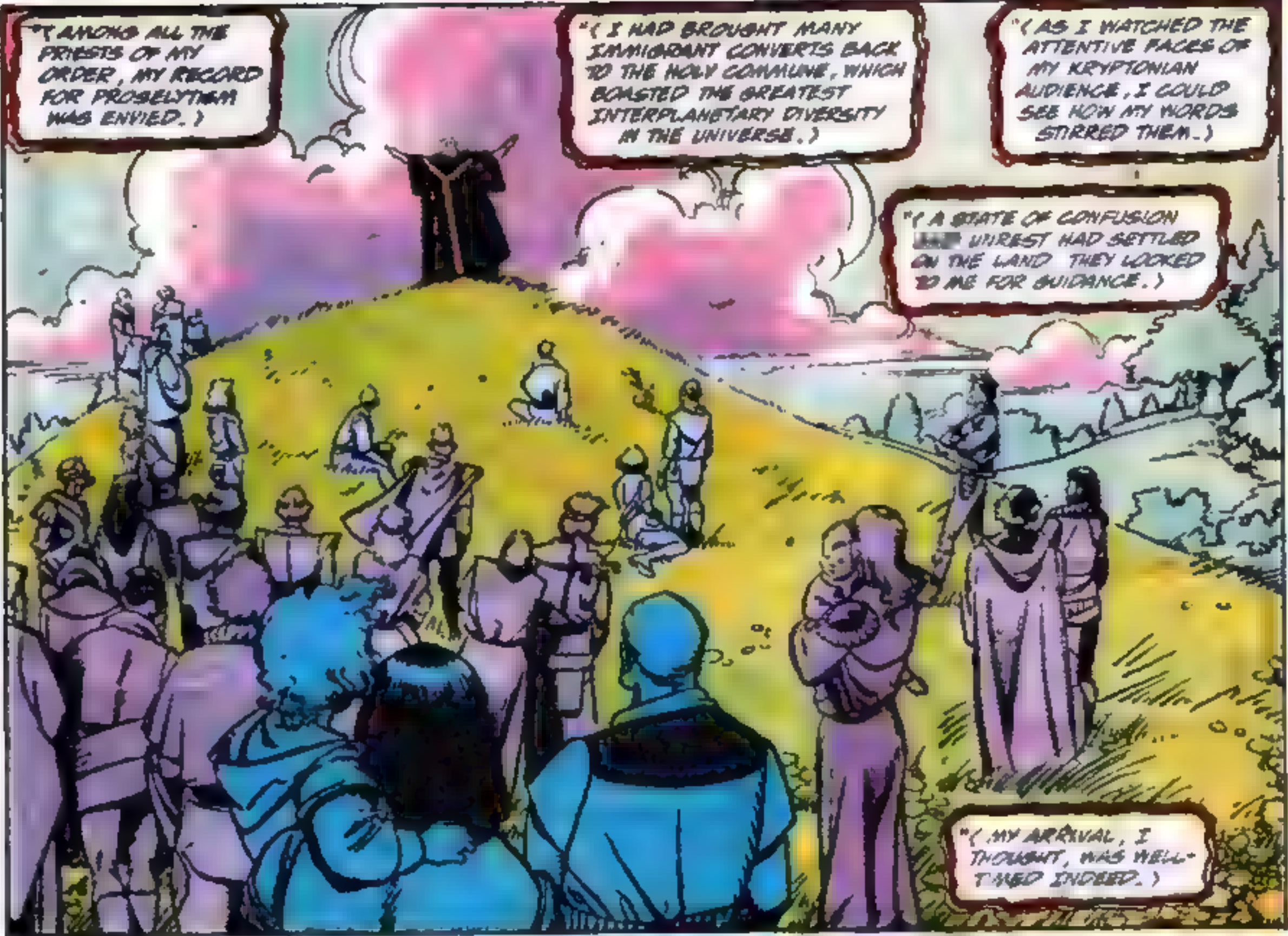
(WHEN MY HOLY MISSION BROUGHT ME TO THAT LUSH, GLORIOUS EMERALD PLANET.)



(THE SACRED TRIBUNAL HAD ASSESSED THE WORLD AS ONE FULL OF PROMISE.)



(A PROMISE THAT I HAPPILY SOUGHT TO FULFILL.)



"AMONG ALL THE PRIESTS OF MY ORDER, MY RECORD FOR PROSELYTISM WAS ENVIED."

"(I HAD BROUGHT MANY IMMIGRANT CONVERTS BACK TO THE HOLY COMMUNE, WHICH BOASTED THE GREATEST INTERPLANETARY DIVERSITY IN THE UNIVERSE.)"

"(AS I WATCHED THE ATTENTIVE FACES OF MY KRYPTONIAN AUDIENCE, I COULD SEE HOW MY WORDS STIRRED THEM.)"

"(A STATE OF CONFUSION AND UNREST HAD SETTLED ON THE LAND THEY LOOKED TO ME FOR GUIDANCE.)"

"(MY ARRIVAL, I THOUGHT, WAS WELL-TIMED INDEED.)"



"(THE PRIEST'S WORDS HAVE THE RING OF WISDOM, SEN-M.)"

"(YES, SYRA. I MUST ADMIT THAT HIS ARGUMENTS AGAINST CLONING ARE QUITE PERSUASIVE.)"



"(PEOPLE OF KRYPTON ! WE MUST PROTEST WITH ALL OUR HEARTS THIS FOULEST OF BLASPHEMIES !)"

"(THE PURVISORS OF HEARTLESS SCIENCE ATTEMPT TO USURP THE PRIVILEGE OF THE DIVINE DEITY.)"

"(YET, WHILE THEY MAY REPLICATE THE BODY, IT IS BUT A HOLLOW SHELL !)"



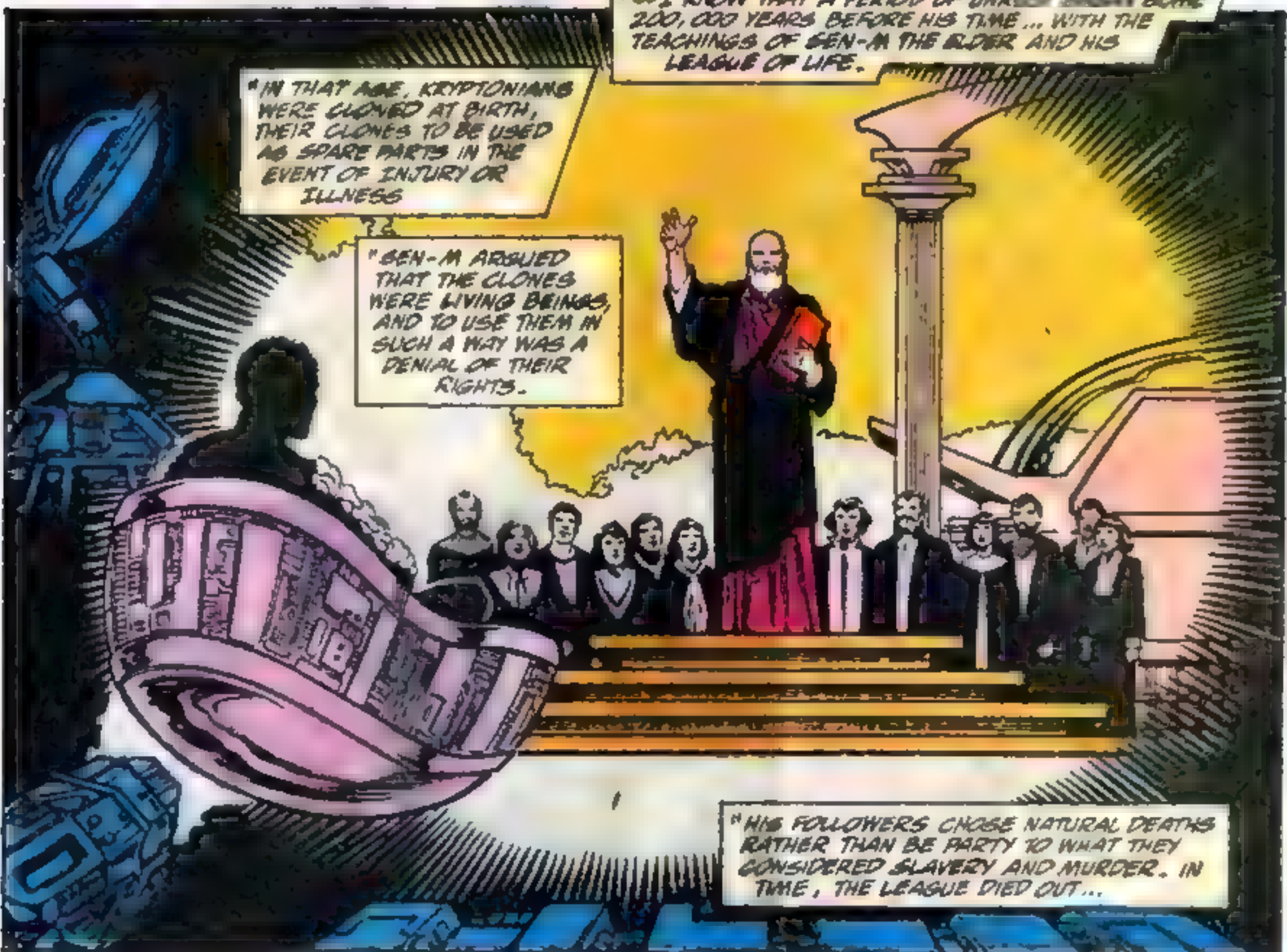
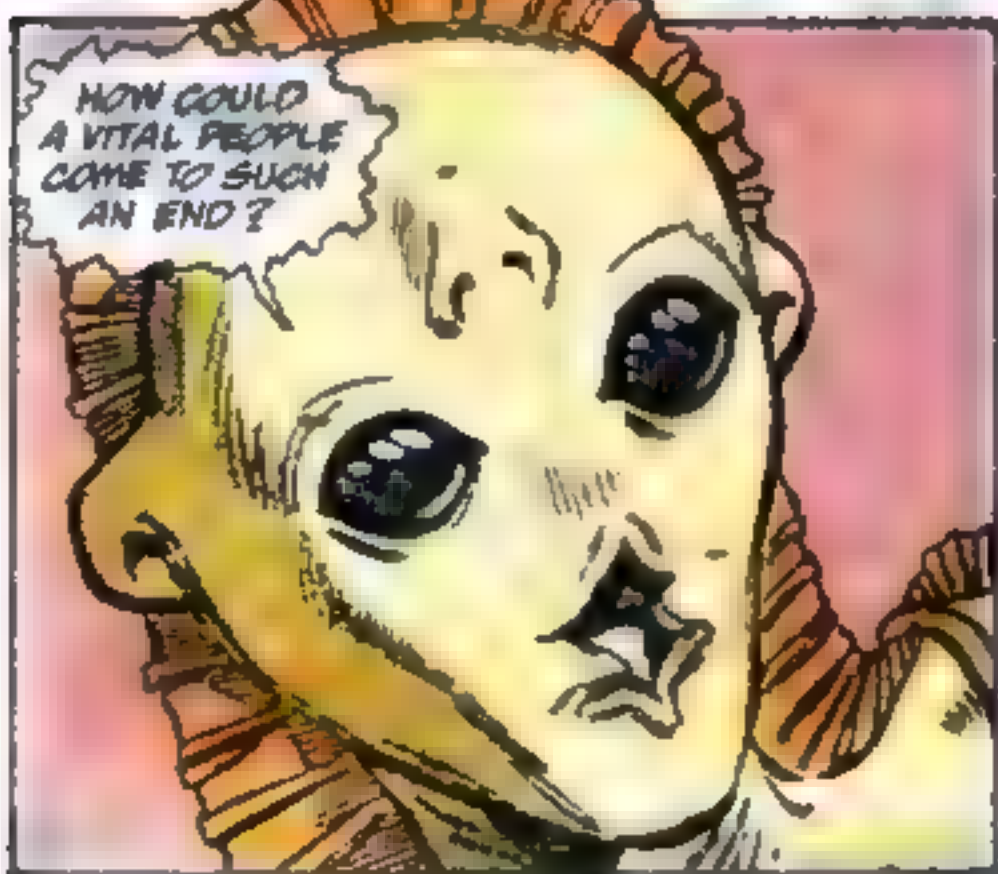
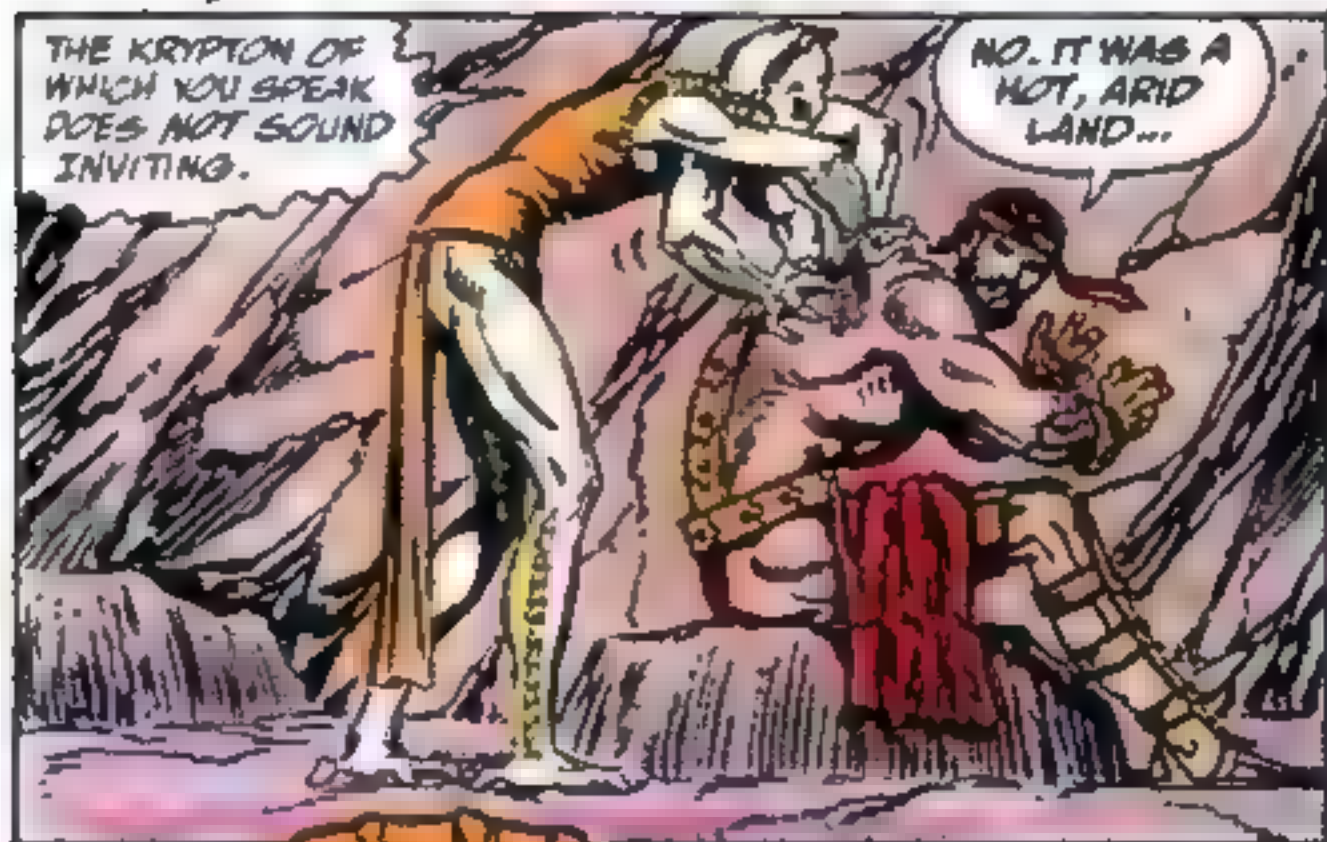
"(THEY CANNOT REPLICATE THE SOUL !)"

"(CLONING IS AN AFFRONT TO ALL CREATION !)"

"(DO YOU HEAR THAT, FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE SCIENCE COUNCIL ?)"

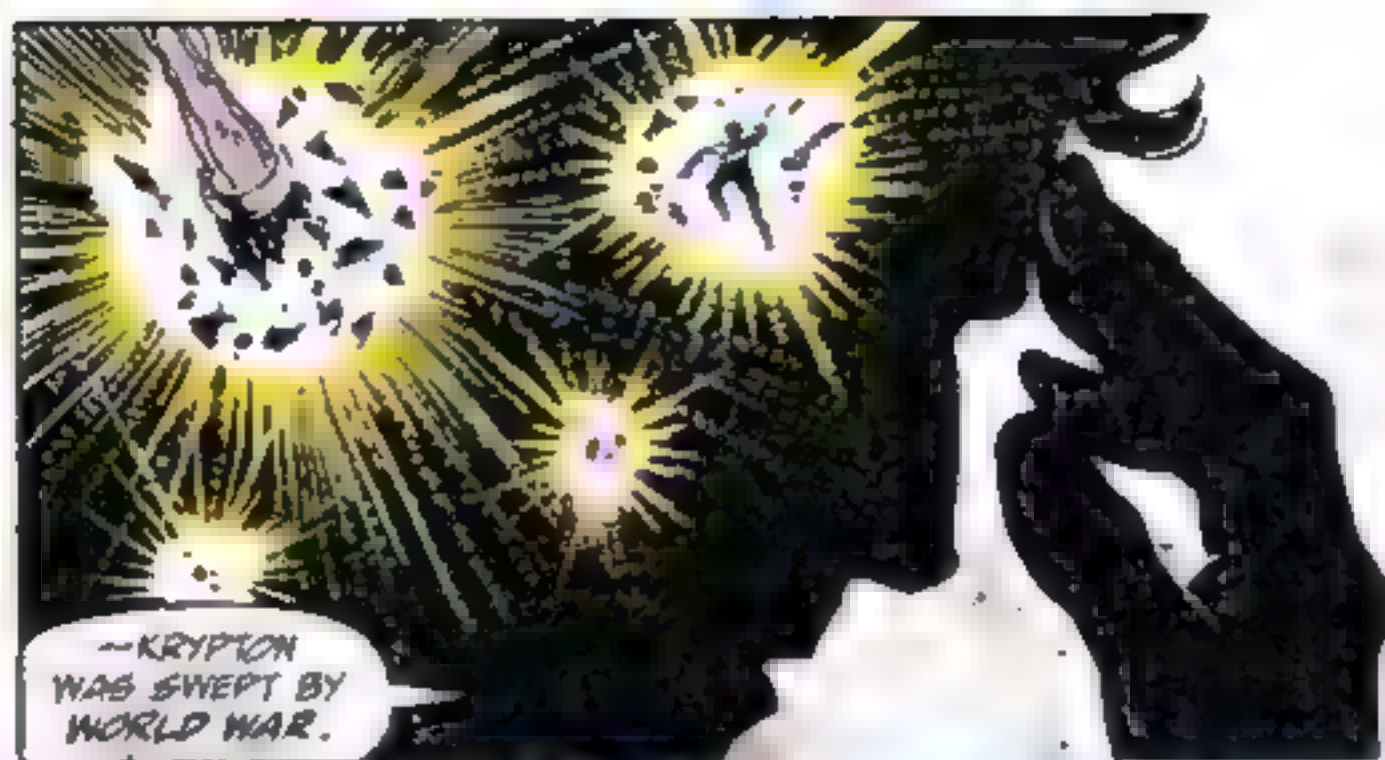
"(THIS FANATIC IS STIRRING UP INSURRECTION, UNDERMINING SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS.)"

"(WE MUST BE SILENCED !)"



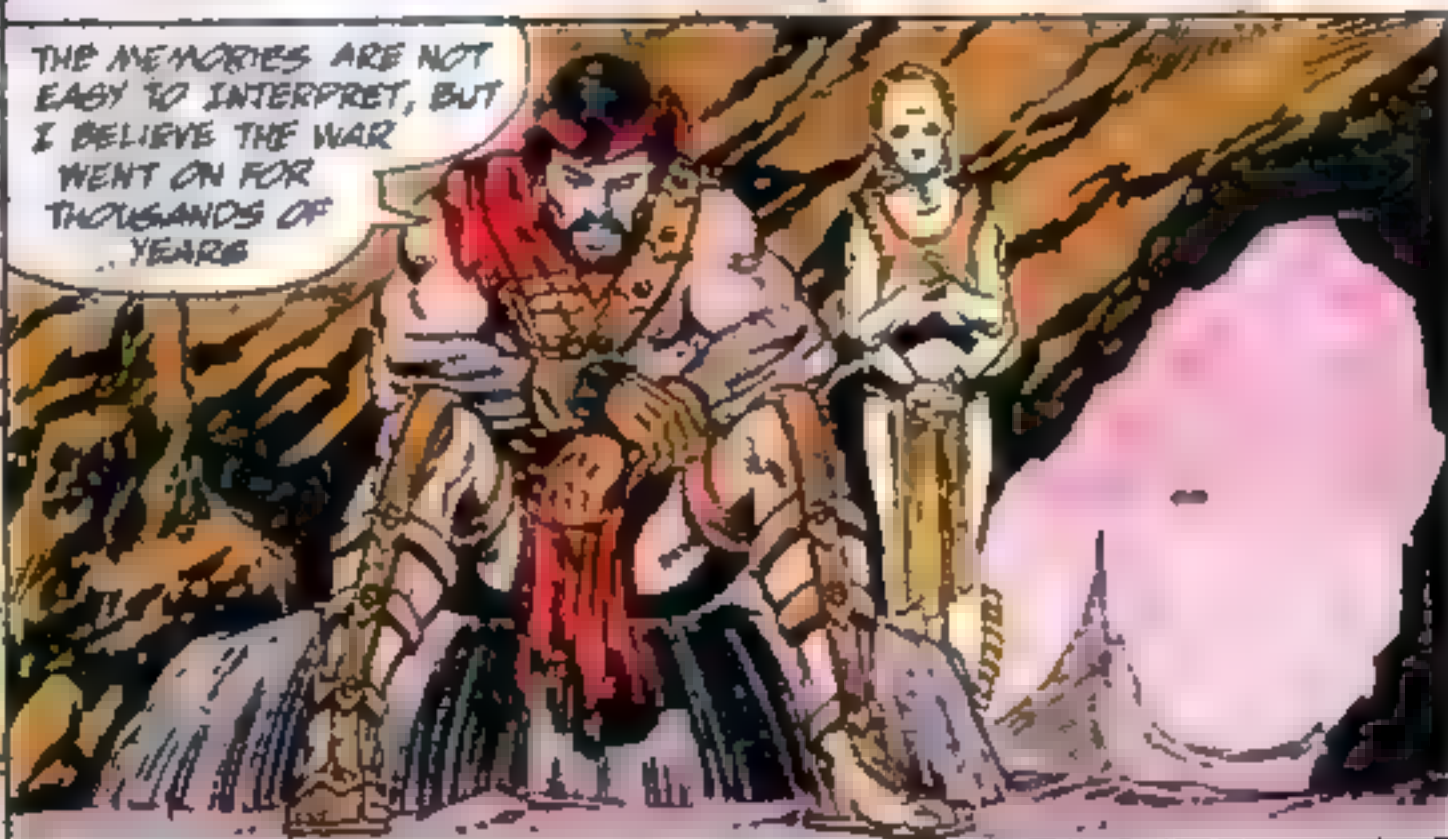
"...BUT THE DEBATE OVER THE USE OF CLONES LIVED ON. A CLONES RIGHTS MOVEMENT GREW IN POWER..ERUPTING INTO RIOTING AND TERRORISM..

"FINALLY, A TERRORIST GROUP CALLED BLACK ZERO DETONATED A NUCLEAR DEVICE IN THE HEART OF THE CAPITAL CITY OF KANDOR. FORTY MILLION DIED, AND IN THE AFTERMATH--



--KRYPTON WAS SWEEPED BY WORLD WAR.

THE MEMORIES ARE NOT EASY TO INTERPRET, BUT I BELIEVE THE WAR WENT ON FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS

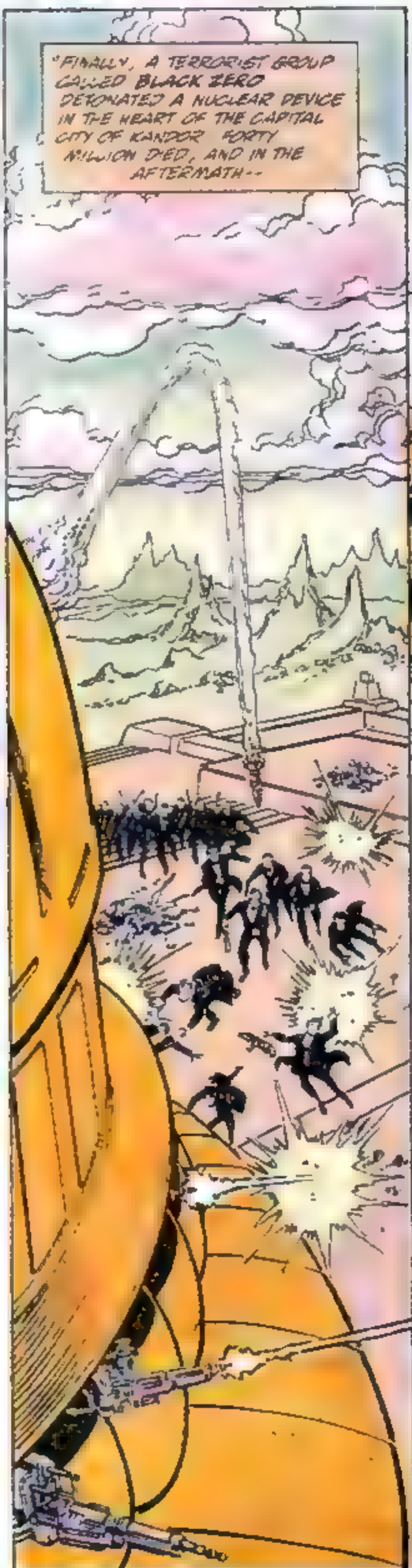


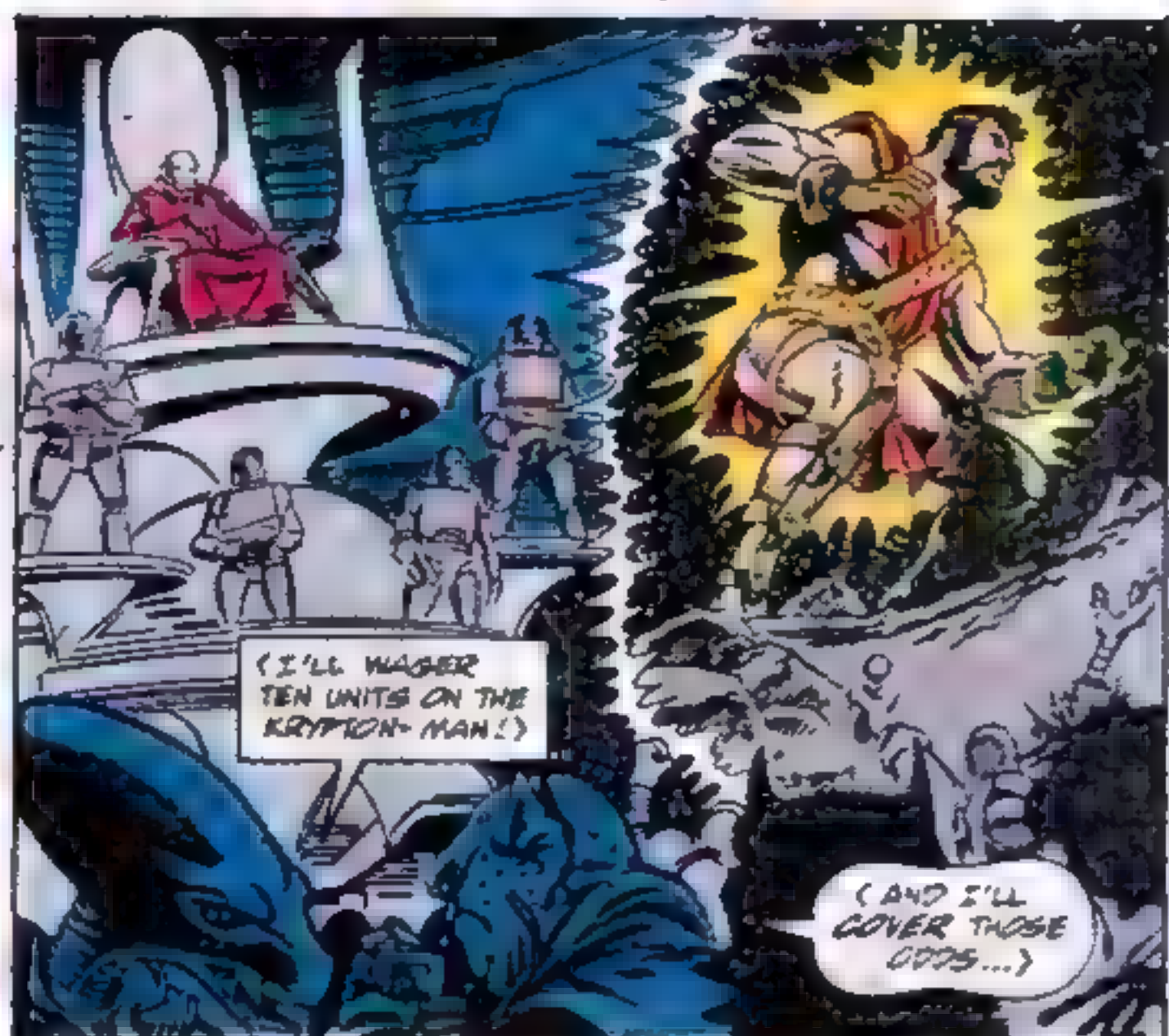
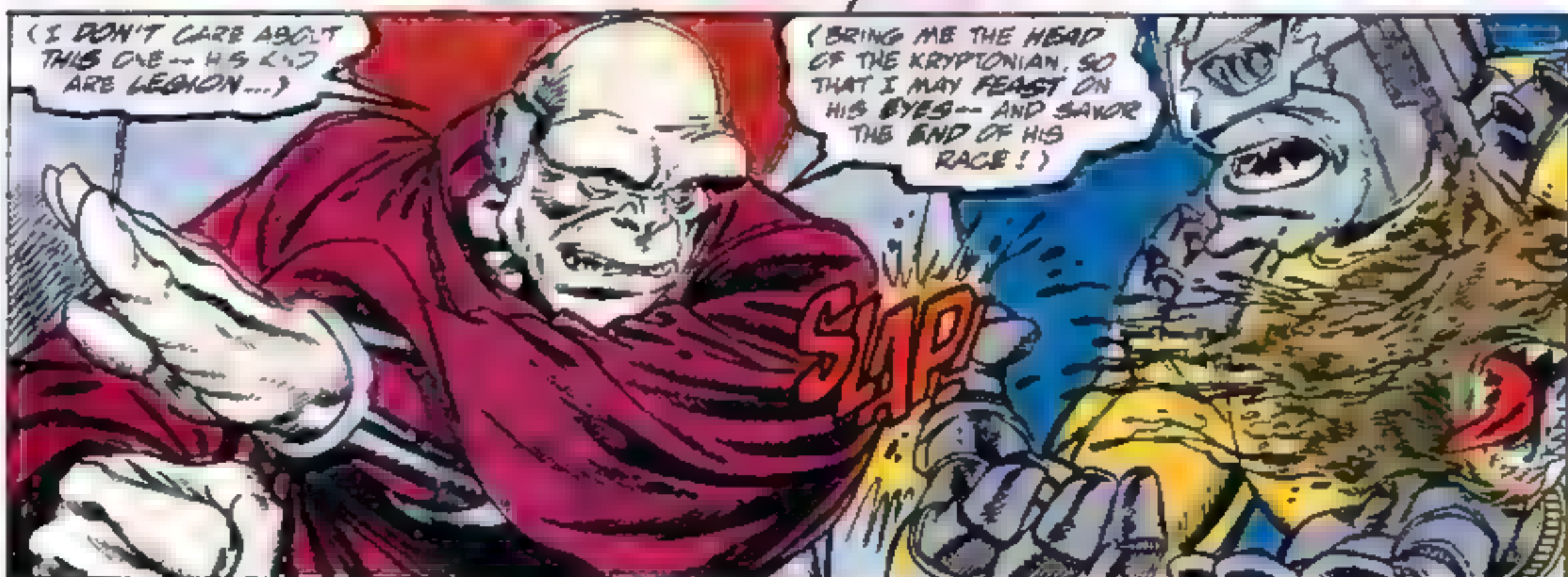
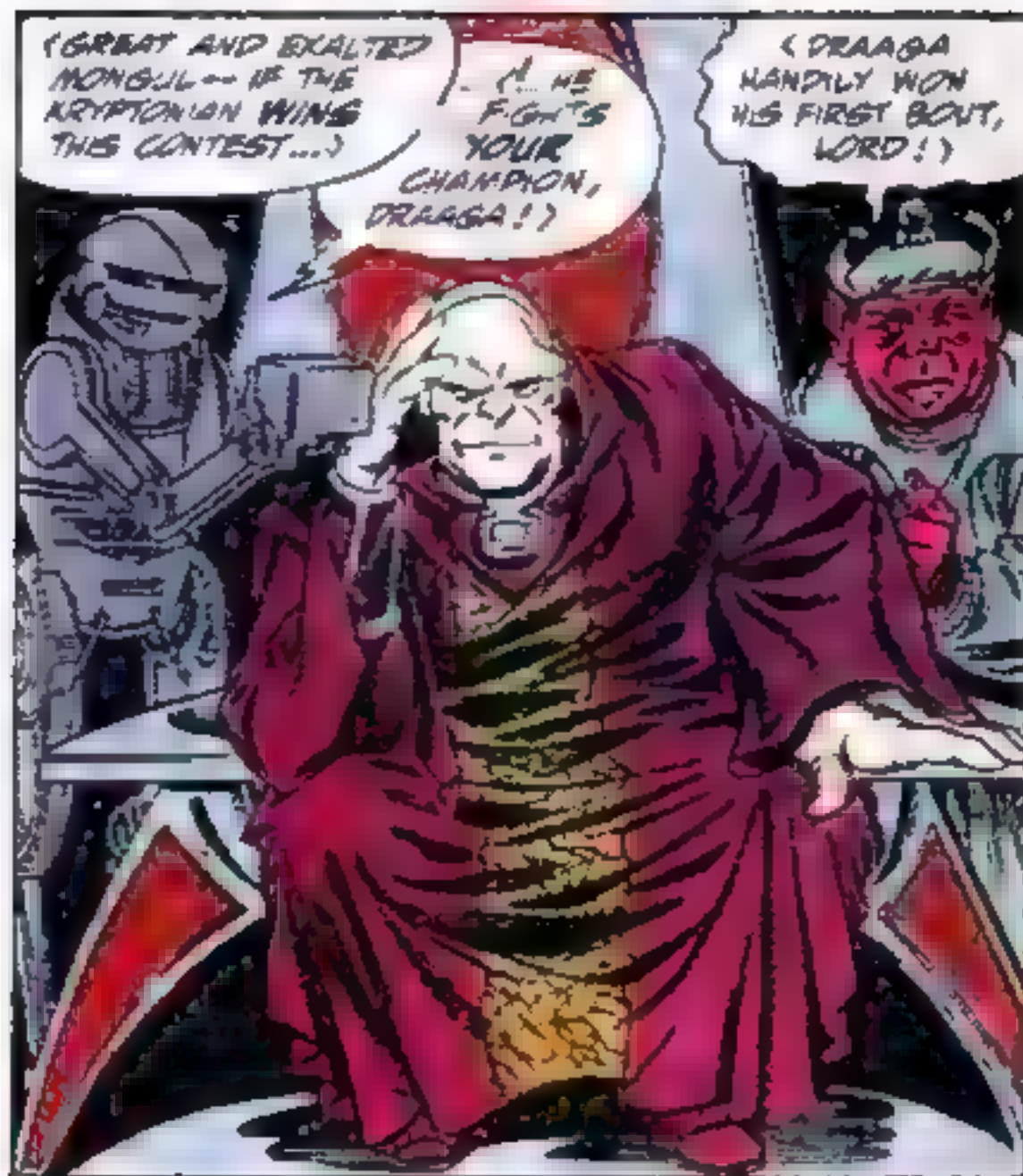
ON YOUR FEET, WARRIOR! THE GAMES RESUME!

DON'T SUPPOSE I HAVE MUCH CHOICE IN THE MATTER.



ETERNAL CREATOR, WATCH OVER HIM.. LET HIM LIVE!





"HE DOESN'T STAND
A CHANCE AGAINST
THE MONMOUTH!"

THIS GUY'S NOT
WASTING ANY TIME
AT ALL!

RAAAAAA

WAIT!
LISTEN
TO ME...



WE DON'T
HAVE TO DO THIS!
MONMOUTH DOESN'T
OWN US!



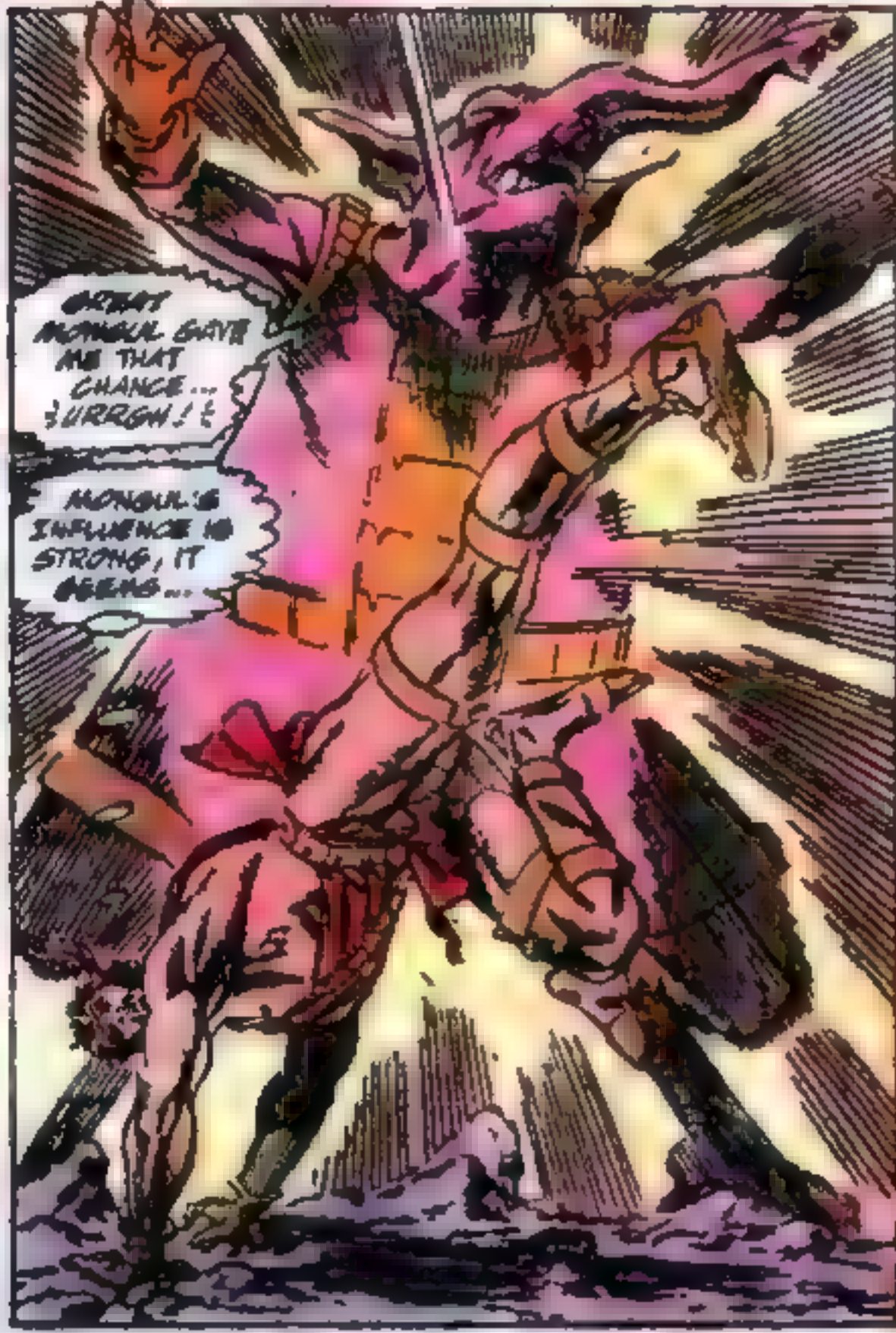
ALL OF THE
PLAYERS IN THIS
"GAME" ARE
POWERFUL
FIGHTERS...

WE COULD
BAND TOGETHER
AGAINST
MONMOUTH!



NO! THROUGH COM-
BAT I EARN
RESPECT FOR MY
KIND...

SMASH!



GREAT
MONMOUTH GAVE
ME THAT
CHANCE...
SURROUN!

MONMOUTH'S
INFLUENCE IS
STRONG, IT
SEEMS...



I'LL
HAVE TO
WIN SOME
INFLUENCE
OF MY OWN,
FIGHTING
MY WAY!

I THINK MY
MICROSCOPIC
VISION HAS
DETECTED THIS
GUY'S ACHILLES'
HEEL...



HIS BODY IS MADE UP
OF COUNTLESS NUMBERS
OF SMALLER BEINGS...

... AND THE FORCE OF
MY BLOWS IS STRAINING
THEIR ABILITY TO HOLD
THEMSELVES TOGETHER...

IF I CAN
HIT HIM
HARD...



ENOUGH! THINK
FAST, CLARK!



A BLAST OF WIND
SHOULD SPREAD
THEM AROUND SO
THEY CAN'T RE-
COMBINE RIGHT
AWAY!

I GUESS THIS MAKES
ME THE WINNER. WONDER
WHAT GO-- HEY!



... THESE FELLOWS
DON'T LOOK TOO
HEALTHY-- MAYBE
THEY CAN'T SUR-
VIVE SEPARATELY
IN THIS ATMO-
SPHERE!



(AGAIN, THE
KRYPTON-MAN
DOES NOT
KILL!)

(THE MONMOUTH
WOULD HAVE
PERISHED, BUT THE
KRYPTONIAN IS
GATHERING TO-
GETHER ITS MANY
PARTS!)

(I STILL
WIN THE
WAGER!)



(KNOW THIS
--MONMOUTH
WILL NOT
LET HIM
LIVE, WHEN
HE DEFEATS
DRAAGA!)

"(CLERIC, I DON'T REMEMBER EVER SEEING THAT STRUCTURE BEFORE.)"

"(BECAUSE I HAD HERETOFORE NEVER SHOWN IT TO YOU.)"

"(THERE CALLKEEPER, IS THE TEMPLE OF THE DIVINE DEITY.)"

"(IN ITS HEART, WE PRAYED TOGETHER, SAVORING THE BENEFICENT TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY WORD. IT WAS A CAUTIOUS TIME. MY DISCIPLES WERE WELL AWARE OF THE DANGERS FROM WITHOUT.)"

"(IN THIS HERETIC ALLIANCE, THE SCIENTISTS INVOKED RAO'S NAME AS THE PROPONENT-- IN FACT, CREATOR-- OF THE CLONING CONCEPT. AMADIAS HONOR GOD CREATES SCIENTIST-- WHO IN TURN RECREATE GOD.)"

"(THE SCIENCE COUNCIL HAD OBTAINED THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWERS OF RAO, THE PLANET'S OFFICIAL, HEATHEN RELIGION.)"

"(AS IT WAS ON SO MANY OTHER WORLDS THE FOLLOWERS OF THE DIVINE DEITY BECAME OUTCASTS, PERSECUTED FOR THEIR BELIEFS.)"

"(ALTHOUGH THE RAOIST PRIESTS SHOWED NO HIGH REGARD FOR THE CLONING ABOMINATION, THEY FOUND THE WORDS OF THE DIVINE DEITY TO BE AN EVEN GREATER THREAT.)"

"(I KNEW THAT THE TIME OF THE GREAT PROCLAMATION WAS AT HAND. MY MESSAGE WAS ALMOST COMPLETE ON THIS DAY I GATHERED THE FATHERS TO THE TEMPLE SO THAT THEY MIGHT HEAR THE VOICE-HOOF OF PRONOUNCEMENTS.)"

"(BUT, IT WAS NOT MEANT TO BE THAT DAY.)"

"(HOLY ONE! YOU MUST RUN! ESCAPE!)"

"(THE SCIENCE COUNCIL! THERE IS GREAT DANGER!)"

(PEACE NOW, SYRA. I'VE FACED THE COUNCIL'S WRATH BEFORE.)

(BUT, THIS IS DIFFERENT, HOLY ONE.)

(I BEG YOU, BEAR WITNESS TO MY MIND-- SO THAT YOU CAN SEE.)

(SO THAT YOU ALL CAN SEE!)

"(I LEARNED OF THE PLOT WHILE PERFORMING MY DUTIES AS REGULATOR OF THE COUNCIL'S ROBOT DATA-BANKS!)"

"(THEY'VE DEVISED A STRANGE NEW WEAPON, LIKE NOTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE THEY CALLED IT THE ERADICATOR.)"

"(THE DATA-BANKS VERIFIED THAT ITS POWER IS BEYOND THE MEASURE OF ALL KNOWN SCALES.)"

"(HOLY ONE, THEY MEAN TO KILL YOU WITH IT!)"

(NO! THEY SHALL NOT KILL OUR TEACHER!)

(WE WILL DESTROY THE COUNCIL! DEATH TO THEM ALL!)

"(VIOLENCE WAS NEVER THE WAY OF THE DIVINE DEITY. I TRIED TO STILL THE RAGE WITHIN THEIR COLLECTIVE BREASTS, BUT, FOR ONCE, MY WORDS FAILED TO MOVE THEM.)"

"(AT LEAST, MOST OF THEM.)"

(SEN-M, I WILL LEAD AN ASSAULT ON THE MAIN SCIENCE HALL. ARE YOU WITH US?)

(DON'T YOU HEAR THE PRIEST'S WORDS, SYRA? WE'RE PLAYING RIGHT INTO THE COUNCIL'S HANDS.)

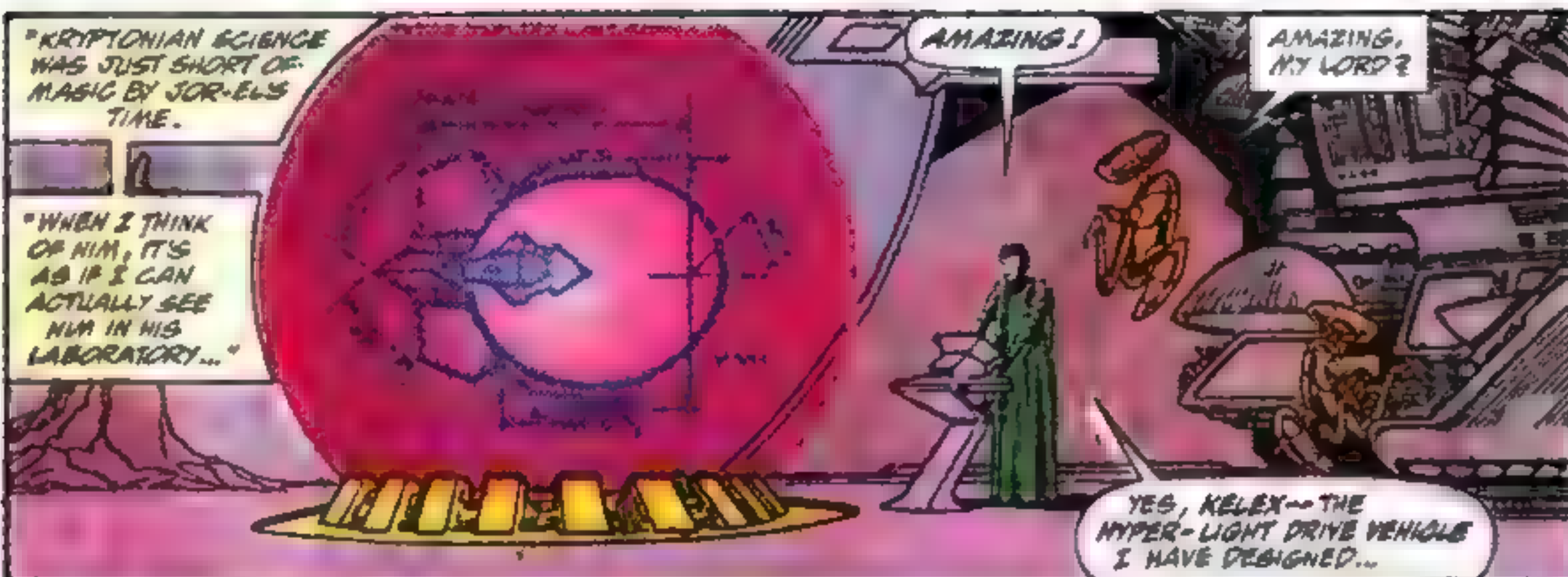
(THE COUNCIL HAS SHOWN THAT PEACEFUL WORDS HAVE NO WEIGHT WITH TO THEM.)

(IF THIS PERSECUTION IS TO END IT IS WE WHO MUST END IT-- IN BLOOD!)

"(SYRA'S WORDS BURNED LIKE A FEVER.)"

"(AS THE TEMPLE WALLS RUMBLED WITH THE ECHOES OF ANGER AND INDIGNATION, I STARED AT THE FADING IMAGE OF THE ERADICATOR...)"

"(SCIENCE AT ITS MOST OBSCENE.)"



"KRYPTONIAN SCIENCE WAS JUST SHORT OF MAGIC BY JOR-EL'S TIME."

"WHEN I THINK OF HIM, IT'S AS IF I CAN ACTUALLY SEE HIM IN HIS LABORATORY..."

AMAZING!

AMAZING, MY LORD?

YES, KELEX--THE HYPER-LIGHT DRIVE VEHICLE I HAVE DESIGNED...



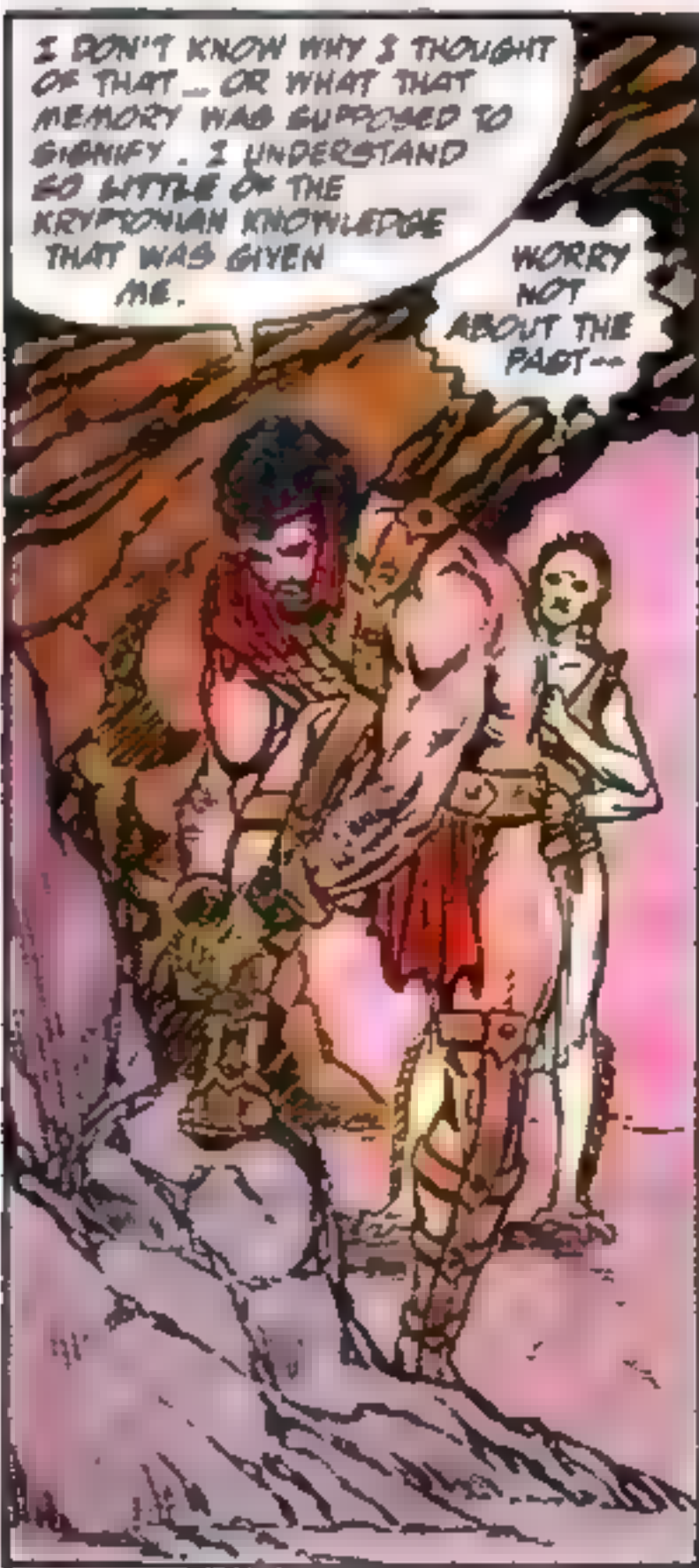
"...I DID NOT INTEND IT SO, BUT THIS CONFIGURATION IS REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO THAT OF A LEGENDARY MACHINE SUPPOSEDLY CONSTRUCTED DURING THE FIFTH HISTORIC EPOCH."

THE PURPOSES OF THE MACHINE--IF IT TRULY DID EXIST--ARE LOST TO ANTIQUITY. THAT MY WORK SHOULD SO RESEMBLE THAT OF THE ANCIENTS IS UNCANNY."

SURELY, SIRE, IT RESULTS FROM YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS RECALL OF THE ANCIENT DESIGN ELEMENTS."



PERHAPS, KELEX. THE SIMILARITIES ARE TOO GREAT TO BE COINCIDENTAL...



I DON'T KNOW WHY I THOUGHT OF THAT--OR WHAT THAT MEMORY WAS SUPPOSED TO SIGNIFY. I UNDERSTAND SO LITTLE OF THE KRYPTONIAN KNOWLEDGE THAT WAS GIVEN ME."

WORRY NOT ABOUT THE PAST--



--CONCENTRATE INSTEAD ON YOUR FUTURE. WHEN YOU RETURN TO THE FIELD, YOU WILL FACE DRAAGA!

HE IS MONGUL'S CHAMPION--IF YOU DO NOT KILL HIM, YOU MUST DIE!

I MUST DIE, WHATEVER I DO...



...NONE OF US LIVE FOREVER."

(CLERIC,
I HAVE AN
IDEA!)

(THAT ALIEN
GLADIATOR, SURELY
IF YOU JUST ALLOW
YOUR TWO MINDS TO
CONNECT, TO SHARE
EACH OTHER'S
THOUGHTS...IT WILL
PROVE...)

(CELLKEEPER, ALLOW ME TO
FINISH MY TALE AND YOU WILL
SEE WHY THAT LIFEFORM
CANNOT POSSIBLY BE WHAT
YOU THINK IT IS.)

(BESIDES, WHAT YOU
ASK DEMANDS GREAT
WILL--AND I AM TOO
OLD AND TIRED.)

(BUT, YOU HAVE TO
TRY! TIME IS RUNNING
OUT! MONGUL'S
GAMES HAVE ALREADY
STARTED!)

(PLEASE,
CLERIC...WHAT
IF YOU'RE
WRONG?)

(DAMN YOUR
INSOLENCE!)

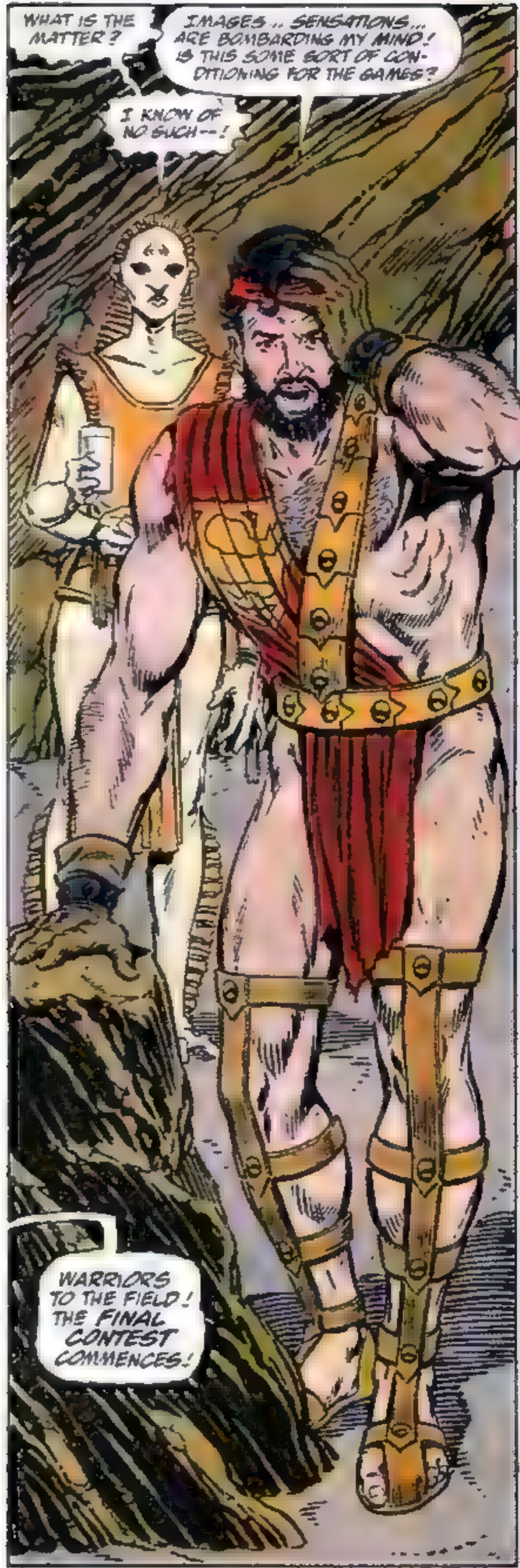
(VERY WELL. I
WILL PROVE IT
TO YOU--ONCE
AND FOR ALL!)

(BEAR WITNESS, CELL-
KEEPER, AS THROUGH THE
REACHES OF SPACE, MIND
MERGES WITH MIND.)

(WHAT IMAGES HIS
MIND CONJURES I WILL
SEE, AND IN TURN SO
SHALL THE WINDOWS
OF MY MIND BE
OPEN TO HIM.)

(NOW!)

GREAT
SCOTT!



WHAT IS THE MATTER?

IMAGES... SENSATIONS... ARE BOMBARDING MY MIND! IS THIS SOME SORT OF CONDITIONING FOR THE GAMES?

I KNOW OF NO SUCH--!

WARRIORS TO THE FIELD! THE FINAL CONTEST COMMENCES!



(CLERIC? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?)

(THE LINK... IS FORMED... THERE CAN BE NO... TURNING BACK...)

(WE... ARE... ONE...)

(THE DIVINE DEITY FORGIVE ME-- WHAT HAVE I DONE?)

(CLERIC!)



(HEAR ME! IN THIS, THE FINAL CONTEST, MY CHAMPION SHALL EMERGE!)

(DEVIATION FROM THE RULES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED! THE VICTOR MUST KILL HIS OPPONENT AND PRESENT HIS HEAD TO ME!)



(LET THE GAME COMMENCE!)

TO THE DEATH!

TO THE DEATH!

TO THE DEATH!



MY HEAD STILL ACHES FROM WHATEVER HIT ME -- I NEED A FEW SECONDS TO SHAKE IT OFF...

LOOK, PAL, I DON'T USE WEAPONS, AND I DON'T WANT THIS FIGHT!



DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW YOU'RE BEING USED? MONGUL HAS NO DIVINE HOLD OVER YOU! WE CAN LIBERATE THE OTHERS...

-- DEPOSE THE TYRANT!



(MONGUL IS CRUEL...)

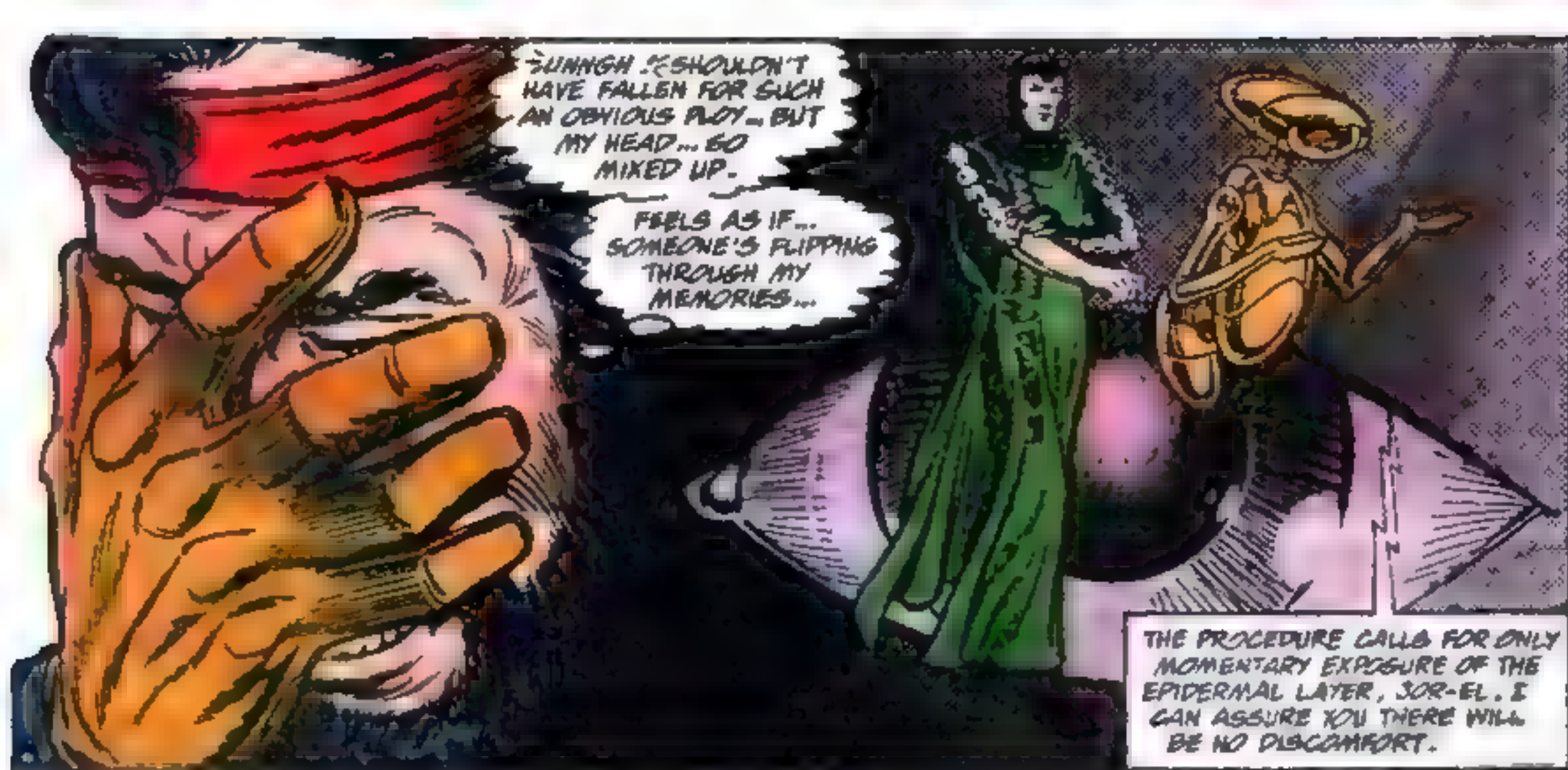
(HE COMMITTS MANY ATROCITIES...)

JOIN WITH ME AGAINST HIM!



(HE IS MY MASTER!)

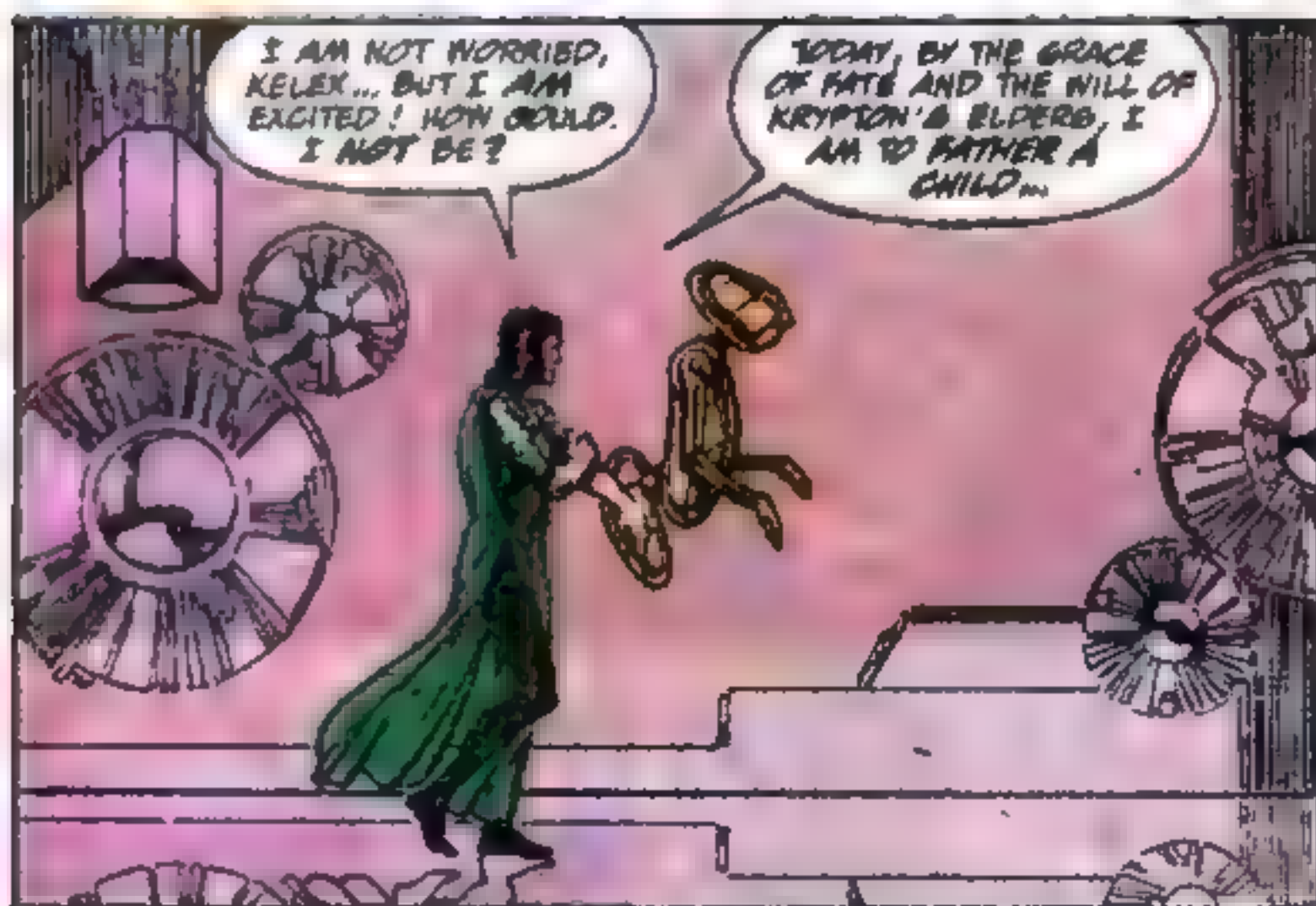
(I AM HIS CHAMPION!)



"UNNGH... I SHOULDN'T HAVE FALLEN FOR SUCH AN OBVIOUS PLOY... BUT MY HEAD... SO MIXED UP...

FEELS AS IF... SOMEONE'S FLIPPING THROUGH MY MEMORIES...

THE PROCEDURE CALLS FOR ONLY MOMENTARY EXPOSURE OF THE EPIDERMAL LAYER, JOR-EL. I CAN ASSURE YOU THERE WILL BE NO DISCOMFORT.



I AM NOT WORRIED, KELEX... BUT I AM EXCITED! HOW COULD I NOT BE?

TODAY, BY THE GRACE OF FATE AND THE WILL OF KRYPTON'S ELDERS, I AM TO FATHER A CHILD...

...PERHAPS THE HEALTHIEST CHILD KRYPTON HAS EVER KNOWN!



THERE IS NO QUESTION OF THAT! YOUR GENETIC PATTERN AND THAT OF THE LADY LARA WERE DETERMINED TO BE THE TWO STRONGEST ON KRYPTON!

THAT MATTERS LITTLE IN THE GREATER SCHEME OF THINGS, KELEX.

ALL THE BLOODLINES OF KRYPTON, I HAVE DISCOVERED, POSSESS A FLAW... BUT IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT--



--THE TREATMENTS I HAVE TAKEN WILL CORRECT THAT FLAW IN MY PROGENY.

AND MY CHILD WILL INHERIT THE GLORIES!

DESPERATELY, THE CHAMPION OF EARTH STRUGGLES TO CLEAR HIS HEAD BUT THE IMAGES RACE ON...



...TO ANOTHER TOWER, HUNDREDS OF MILES DISTANT...



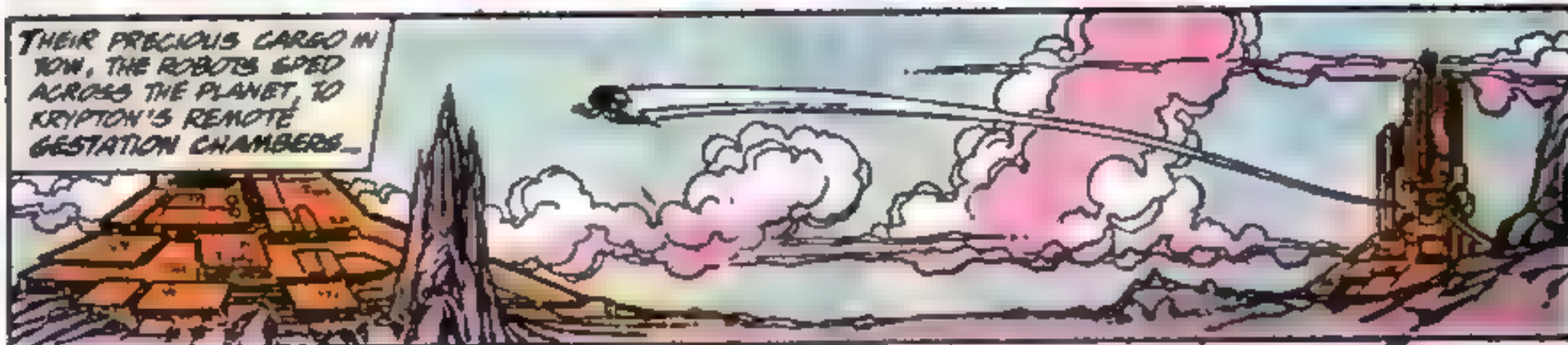
...WHERE A SECOND MEDICAL TEAM SECURED GENETIC MATERIAL FROM THE WOMAN LARA...



CONGRATULATIONS, MY LADY. IT WILL BE A BOY.



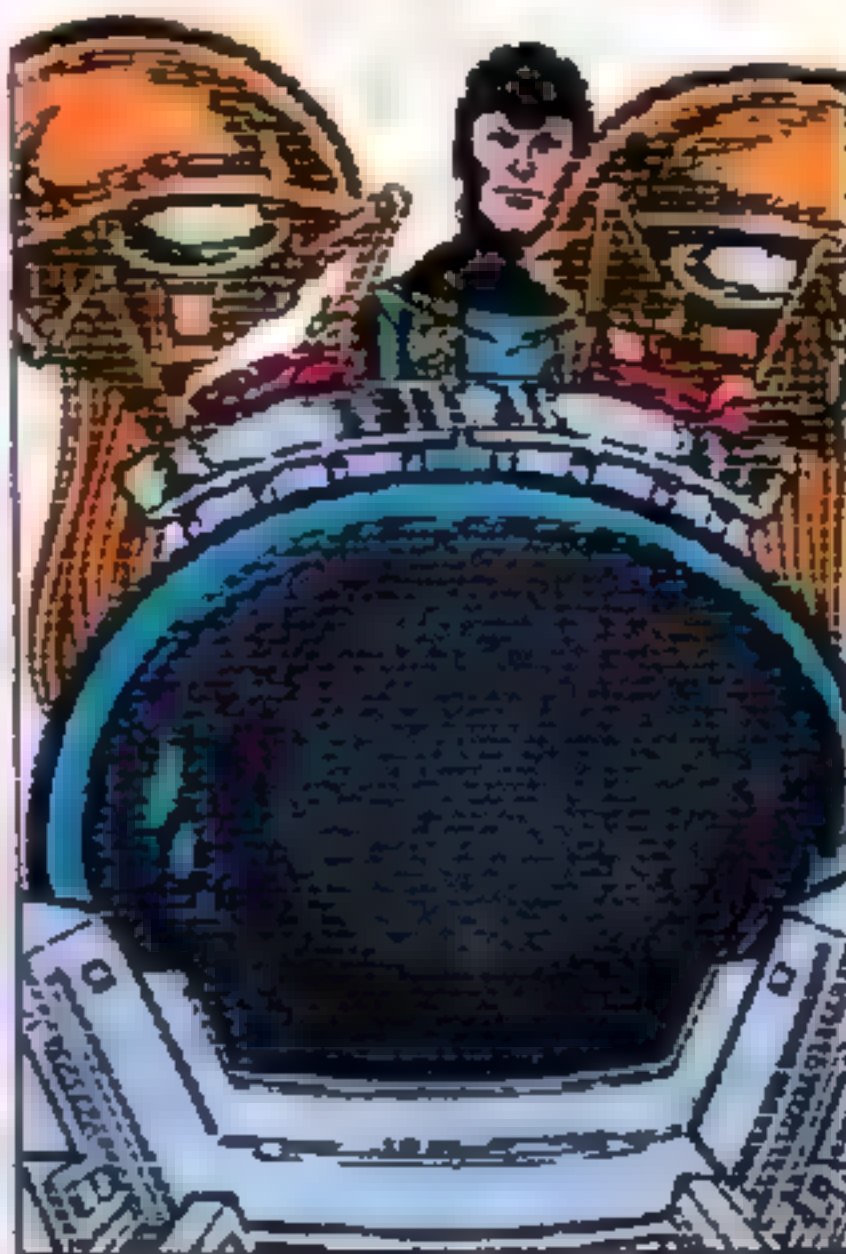
THEIR PRECIOUS CARGO IN TOW, THE ROBOTS SPED ACROSS THE PLANET, TO KRYPTON'S REMOTE GESTATION CHAMBERS...



...THEIR EVERY MOVE MONITORED BY JOR-EL FROM AFAR VIA HOLOGRAPHIC VIEWER.



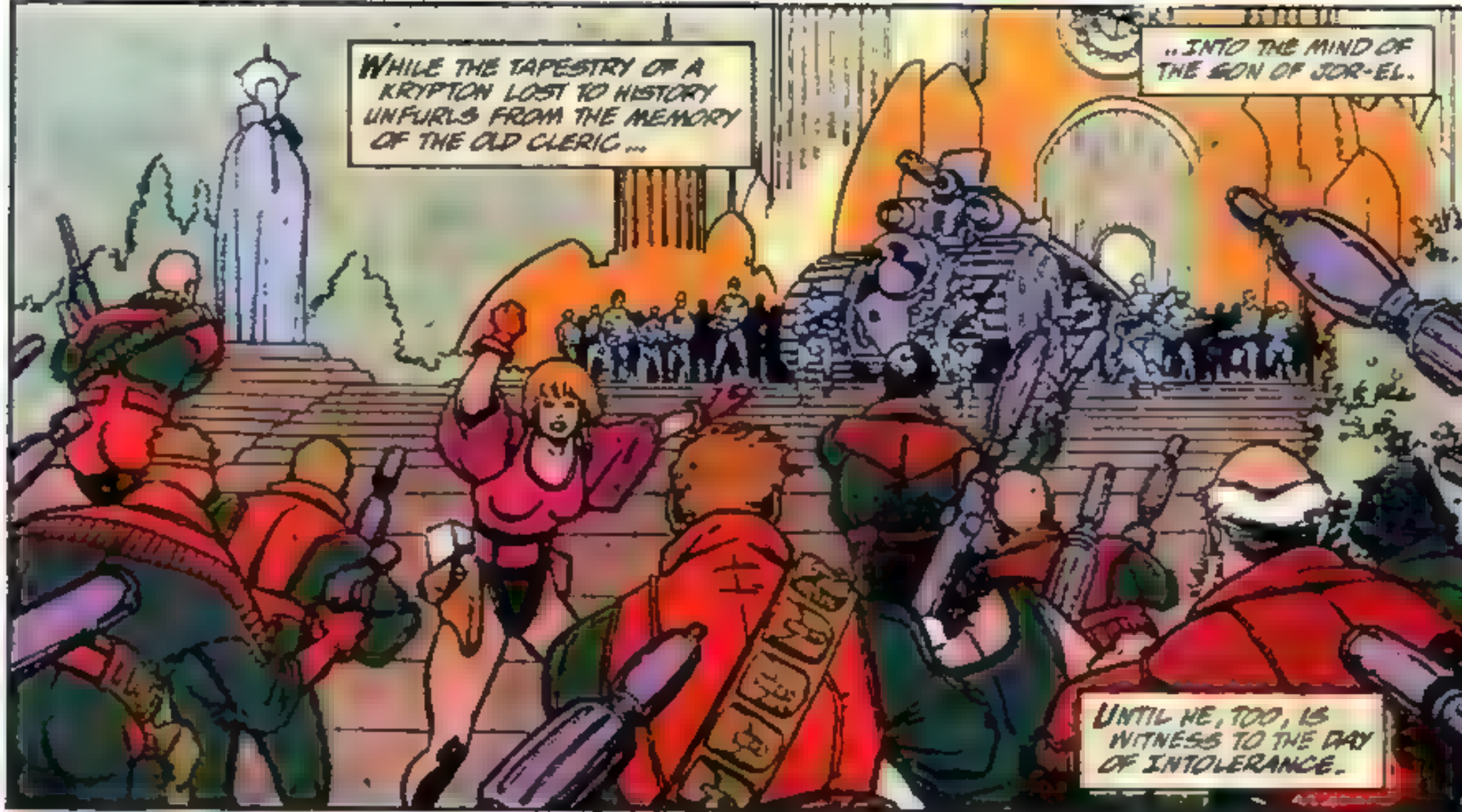
AS THE MEDICAL TEAMS INJECTED THEIR PAYLOADS INTO THE GENETIC MATRIX, JOR-EL WATCHED IN SILENT FASCINATION.



THROUGH THE MIND'S EYE OF KRYPTON'S LAST SON, THE OLD CLERIC WATCHED...



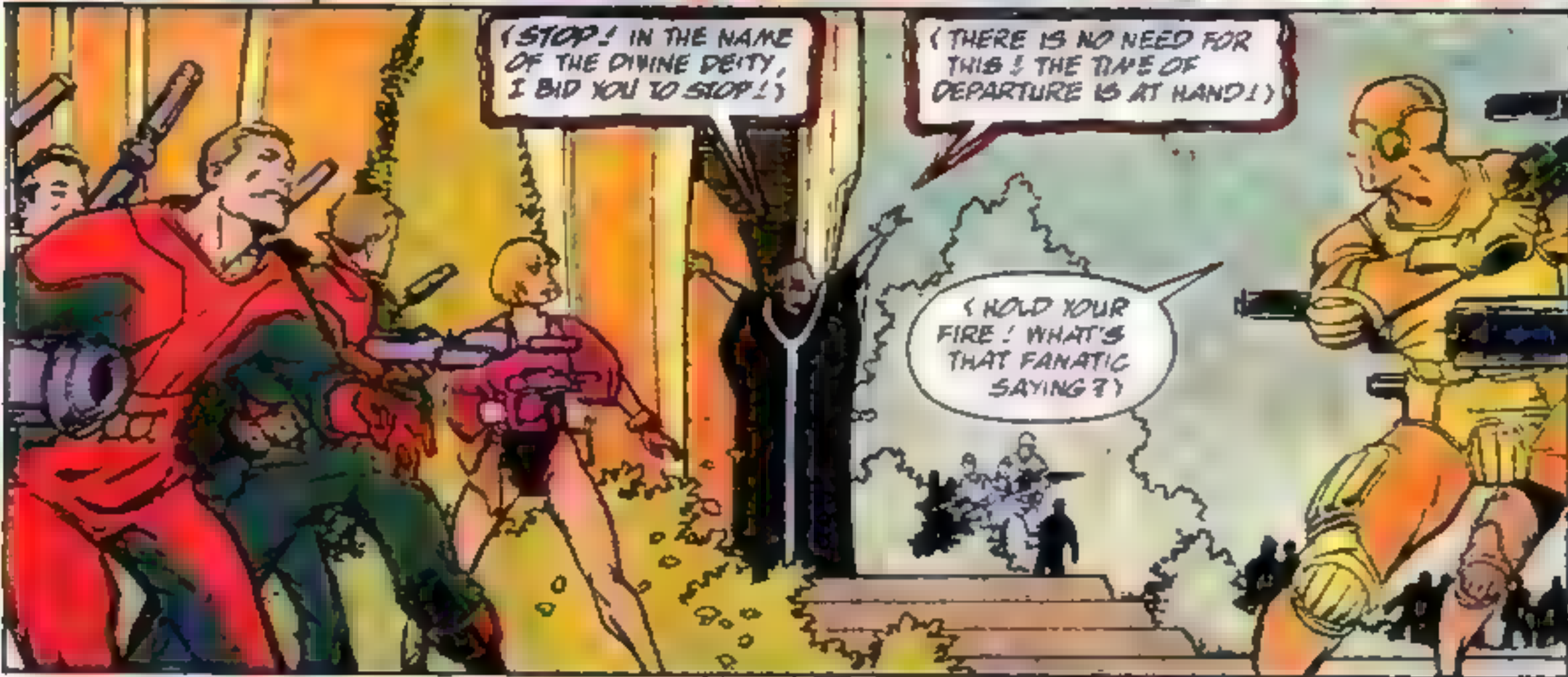
...AND LEARNS.



WHILE THE TAPESTRY OF A KRYPTON LOST TO HISTORY UNFURLS FROM THE MEMORY OF THE OLD CLERIC...

.. INTO THE MIND OF THE SON OF JOR-EL.

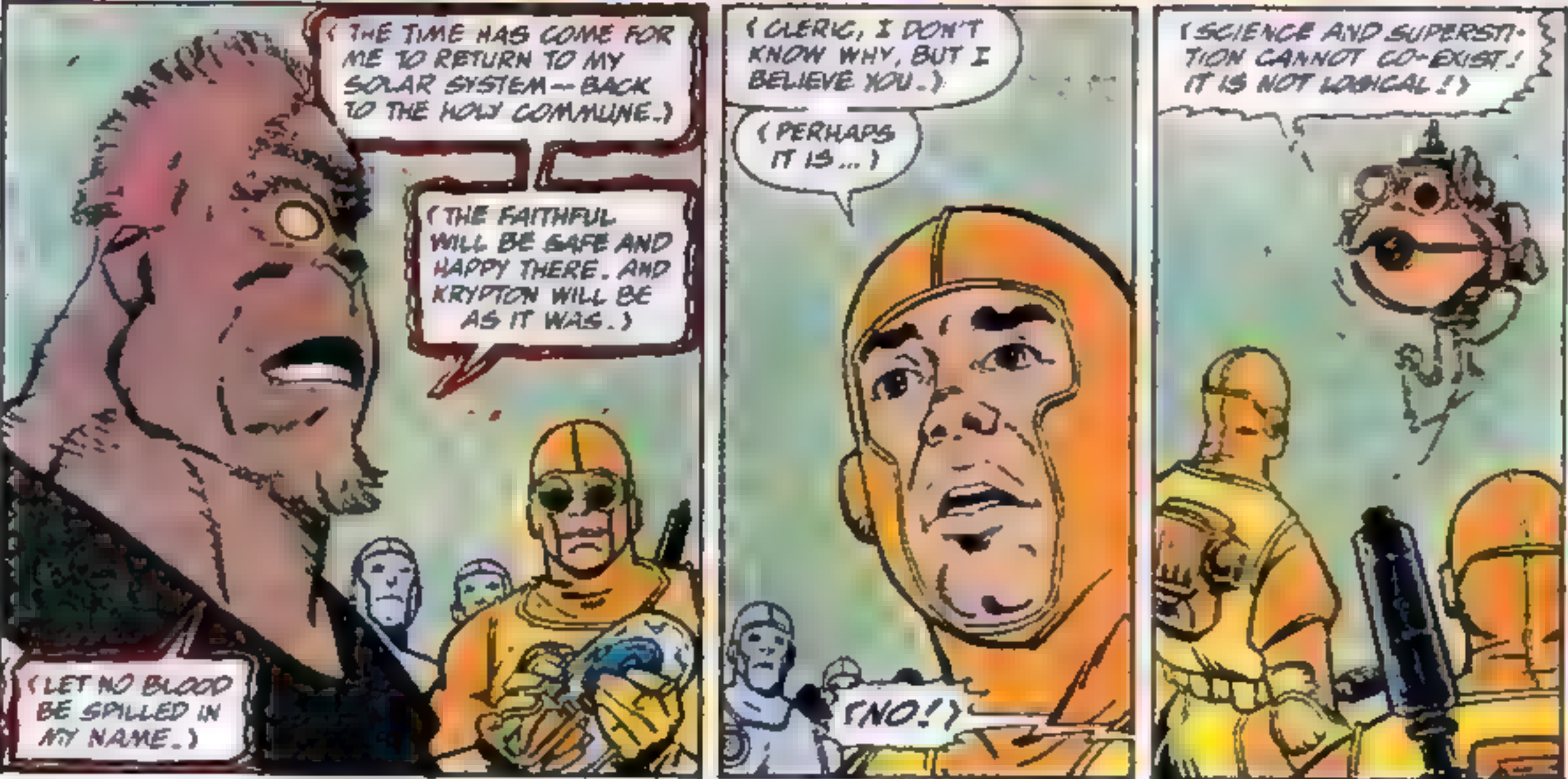
UNTIL HE, TOO, IS WITNESS TO THE DAY OF INTOLERANCE.



(STOP! IN THE NAME OF THE DIVINE DEITY, I BID YOU TO STOP!)

(THERE IS NO NEED FOR THIS! THE TIME OF DEPARTURE IS AT HAND!)

(HOLD YOUR FIRE! WHAT'S THAT FANATIC SAYING?)



(THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO RETURN TO MY SOLAR SYSTEM-- BACK TO THE HOLY COMMUNE.)

(THE FAITHFUL WILL BE SAFE AND HAPPY THERE. AND KRYPTON WILL BE AS IT WAS.)

(LET NO BLOOD BE SPILLED IN MY NAME.)

(CLERIC, I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I BELIEVE YOU.)

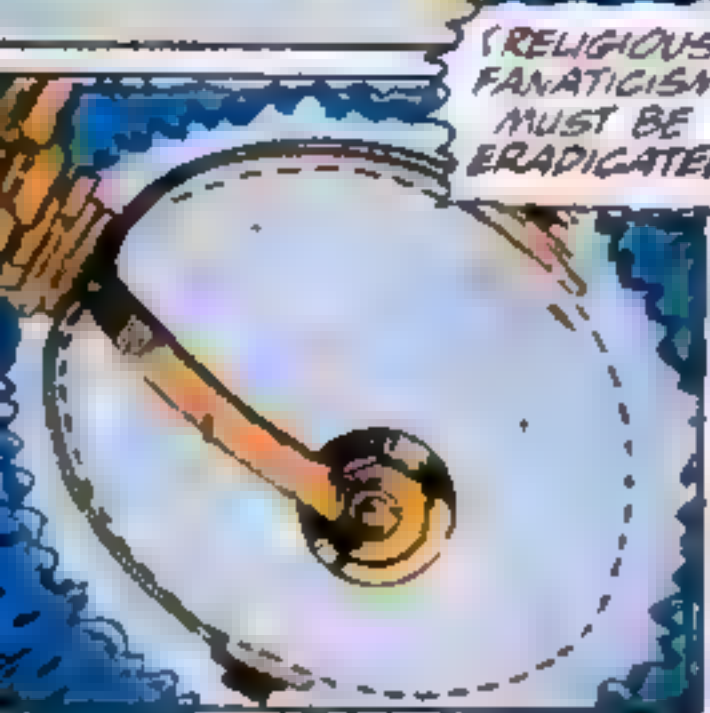
(PERHAPS IT IS...)

(NO!)

(SCIENCE AND SUPERSTITION CANNOT CO-EXIST! IT IS NOT LOGICAL!)



(FOR THE COUNCIL TO SURVIVE...)



(RELIGIOUS FANATICISM MUST BE ERADICATED!)



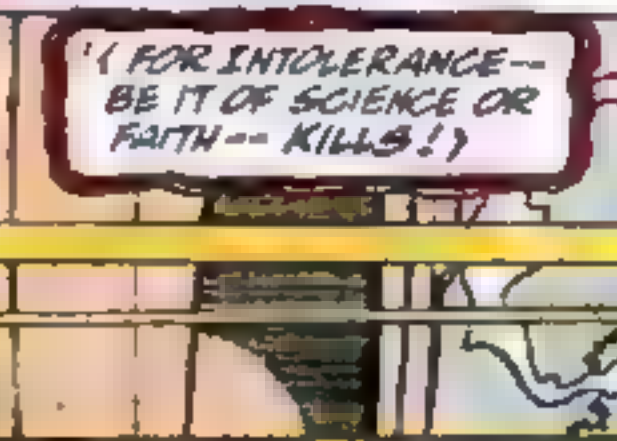
"(I WAS CARELESS. MY BODY CONVULGED WITH THE SPASMS OF INTENSE, ALL-CONSUMING PAIN-)"



(YET, MIRACULOUSLY, I DID NOT DIE!)



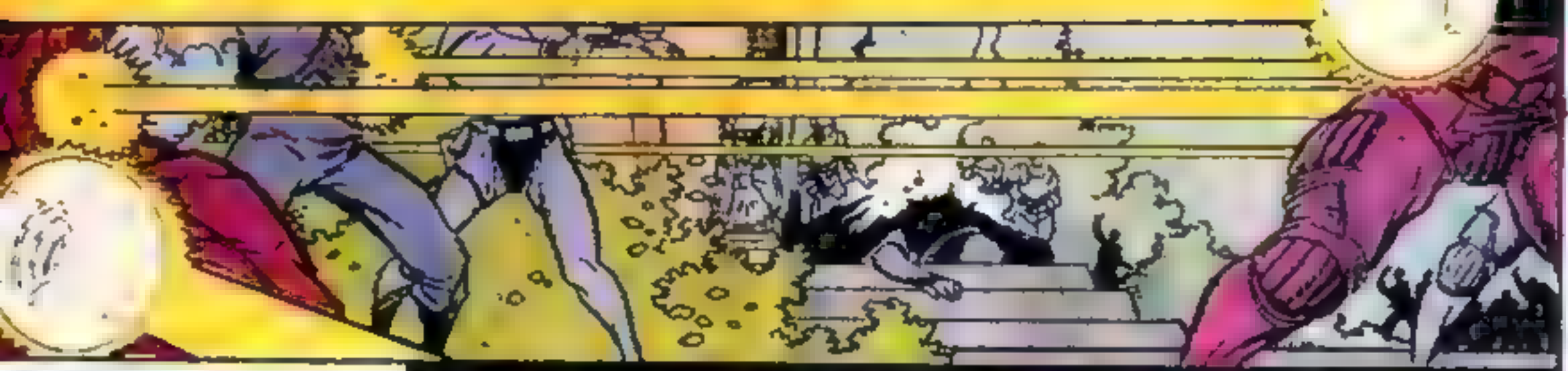
"(BUT OTHERS DID. SO MANY DID-)"



"(FOR INTOLERANCE-- BE IT OF SCIENCE OR FAITH-- KILLS!)"



"(WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IS STILL A PUZZLE TO ME:)"



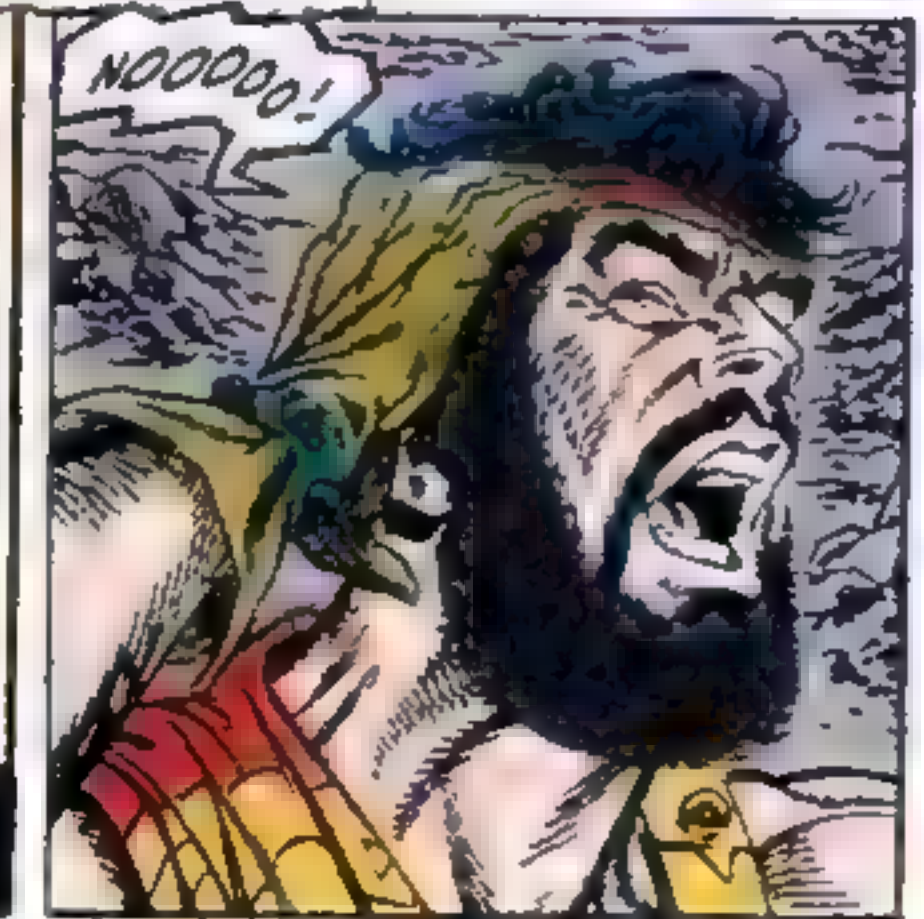
(HALT! YOU ARE DOING THAT WRONG! DON'T UNDO THE POSITIONING THAT WAY!)



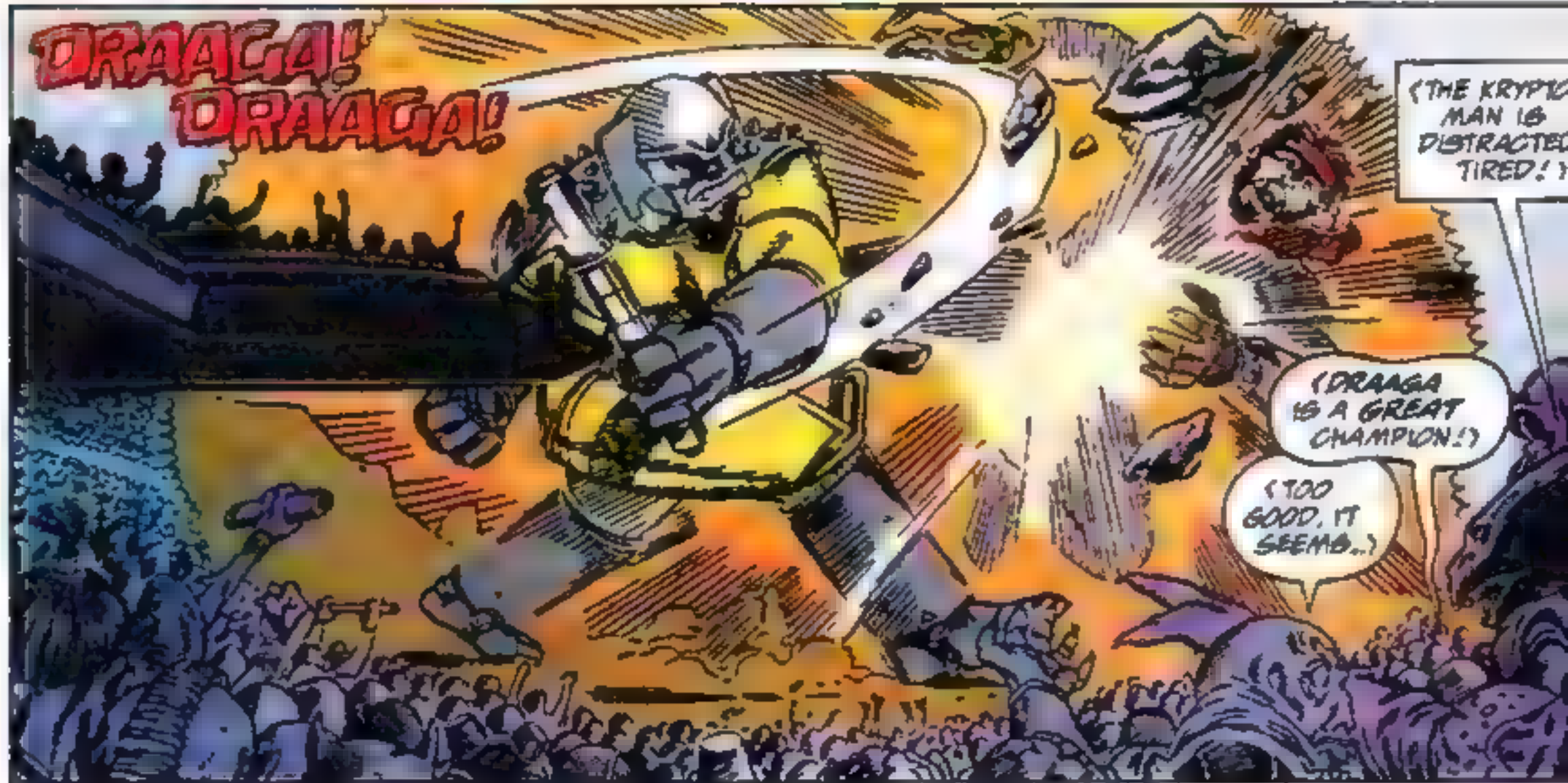
(YOU'RE CORRUPTING THE ERADICATOR MATRIX!)



(IT'S GOING TO...)



NOOOO!

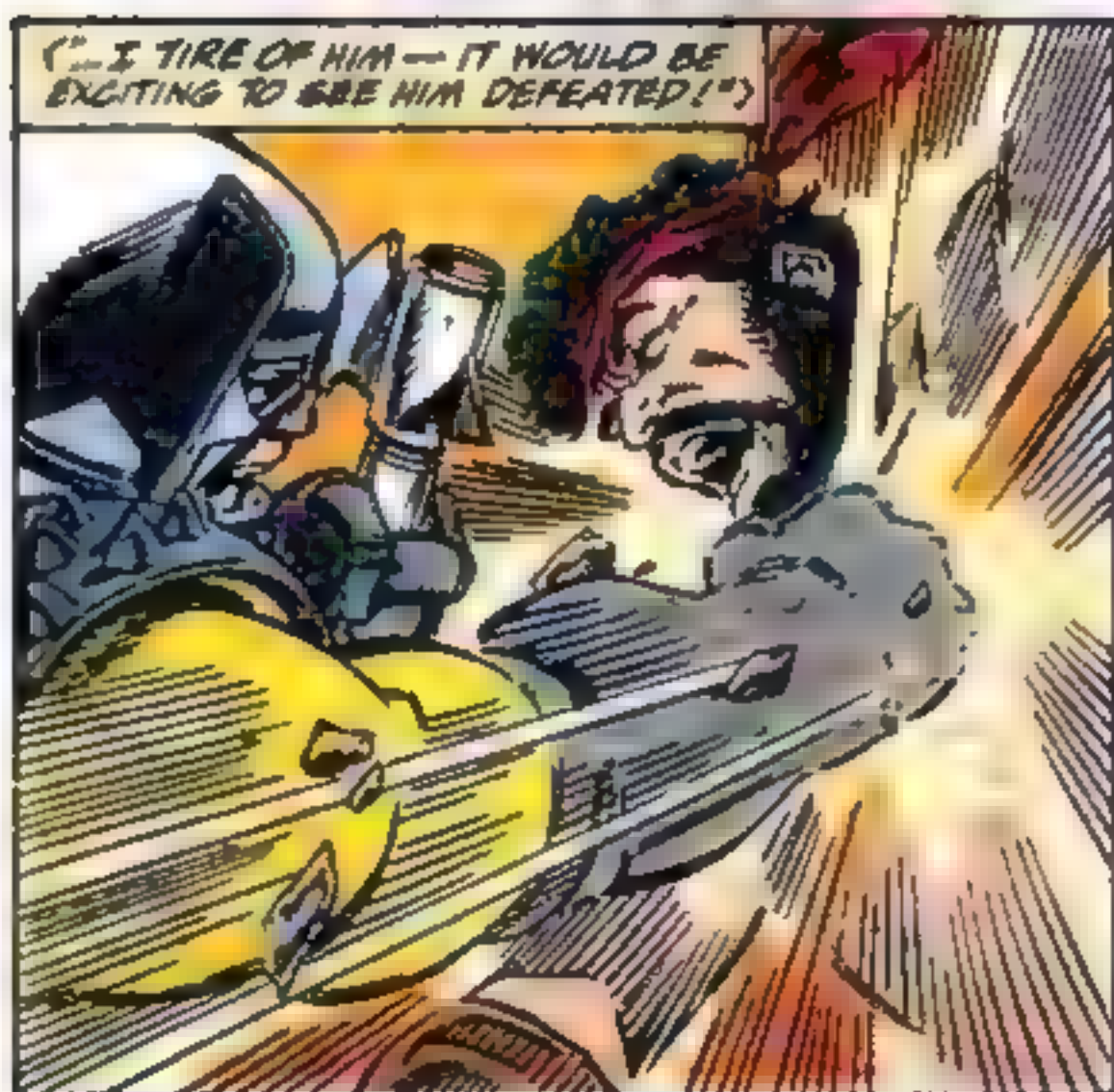


**DRAAGA!
DRAAGA!**

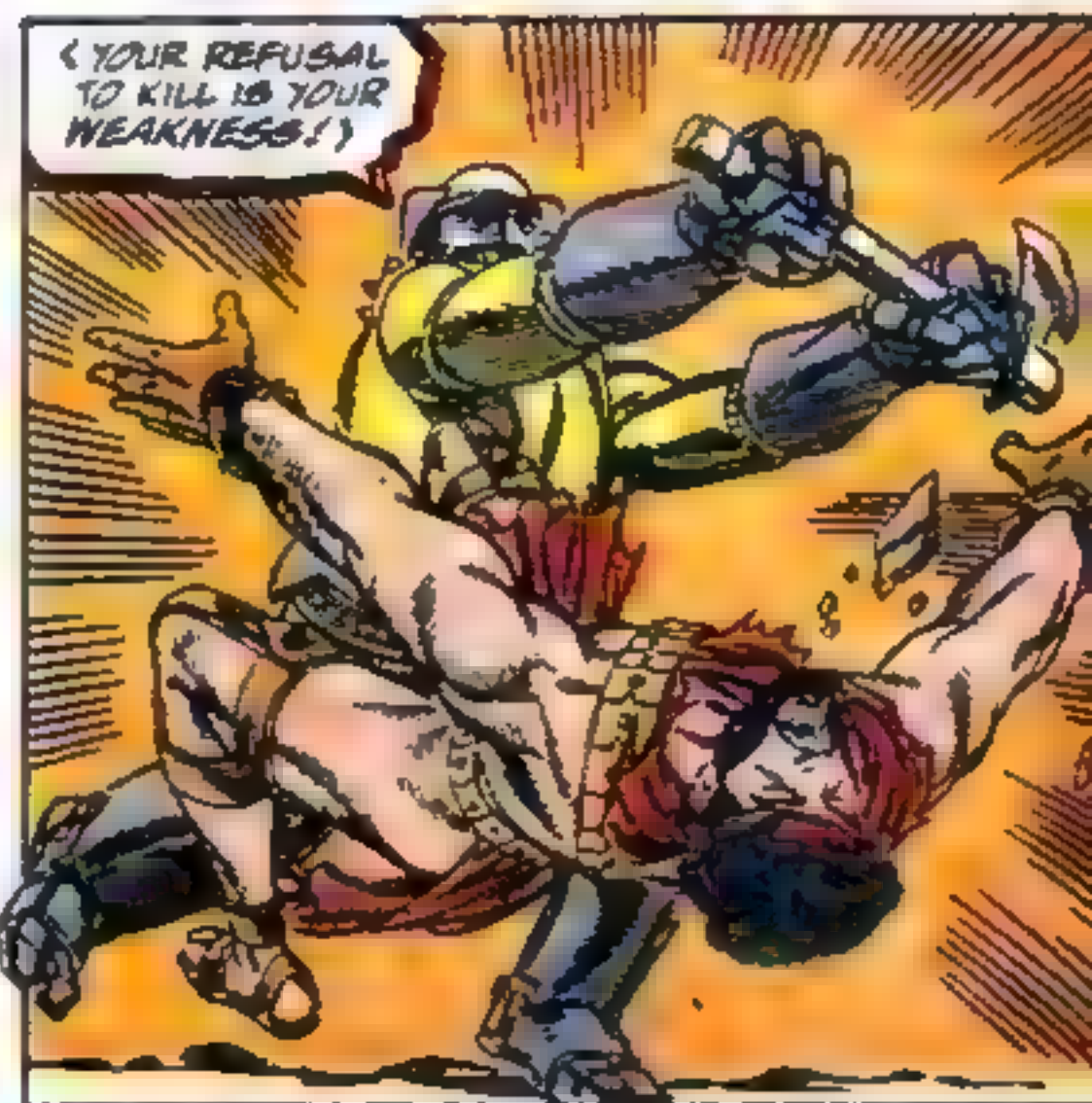
(THE KRYPTO
MAN IS
DISTRACTED
TIRED!)

(DRAAGA
IS A GREAT
CHAMPION!)

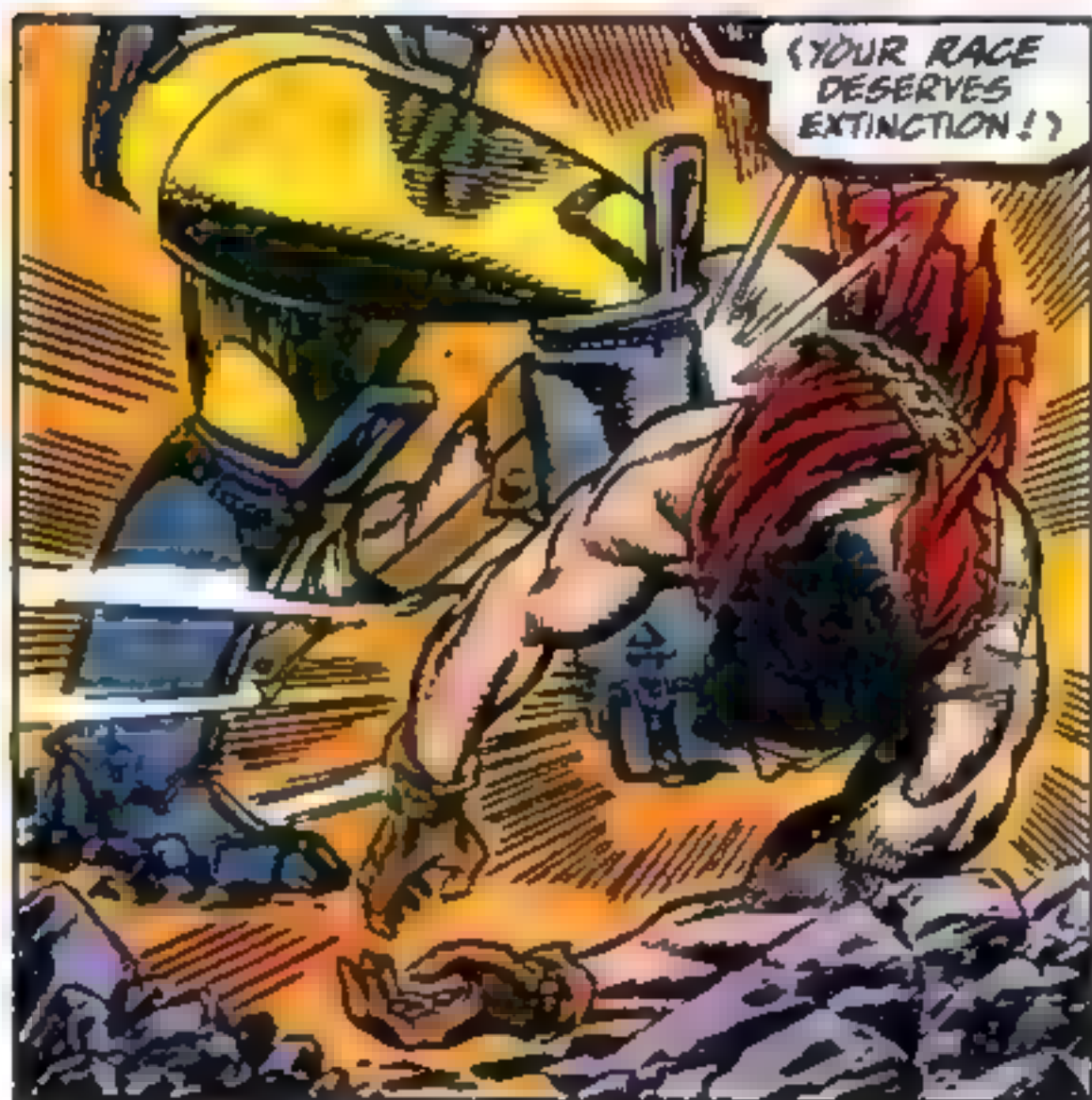
(TOO
GOOD, IT
SEEMS...)



(...I TIRE OF HIM -- IT WOULD BE
EXCITING TO SEE HIM DEFEATED!)



(YOUR REFUSAL
TO KILL IS YOUR
WEAKNESS!)



(YOUR RACE
DESERVES
EXTINCTION!)



(A RACE OF
COWARDS WHO
DO NOT MERT
A WARRIOR'S
DEATH!)



(YES!
STAND AND
FACE ME...)

(...THIS
ENDS
NOW!)



IT'S JUST
STARTED,
DRAAGA!

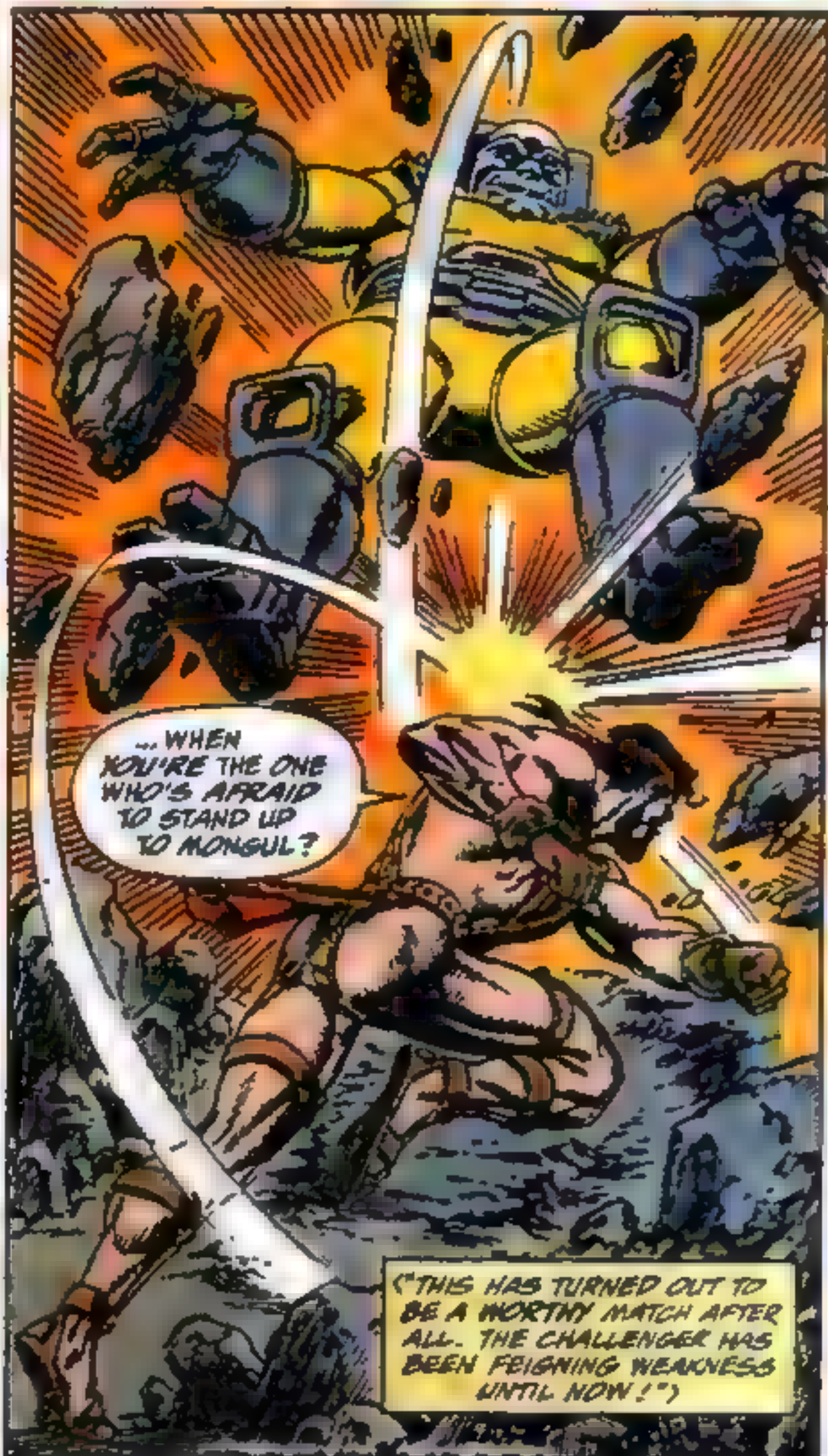


(YAAAARGH!)

NO
WEAPONS—
HAND TO
HAND COM-
BAT!



AND
WHERE DO
YOU GET OFF
CALLING
ME A
COWARD...



... WHEN
YOU'RE THE ONE
WHO'S AFRAID
TO STAND UP
TO MONGUL?

(THIS HAS TURNED OUT TO
BE A WORTHY MATCH AFTER
ALL. THE CHALLENGER HAS
BEEN FEIGNING WEAKNESS
UNTIL NOW!)

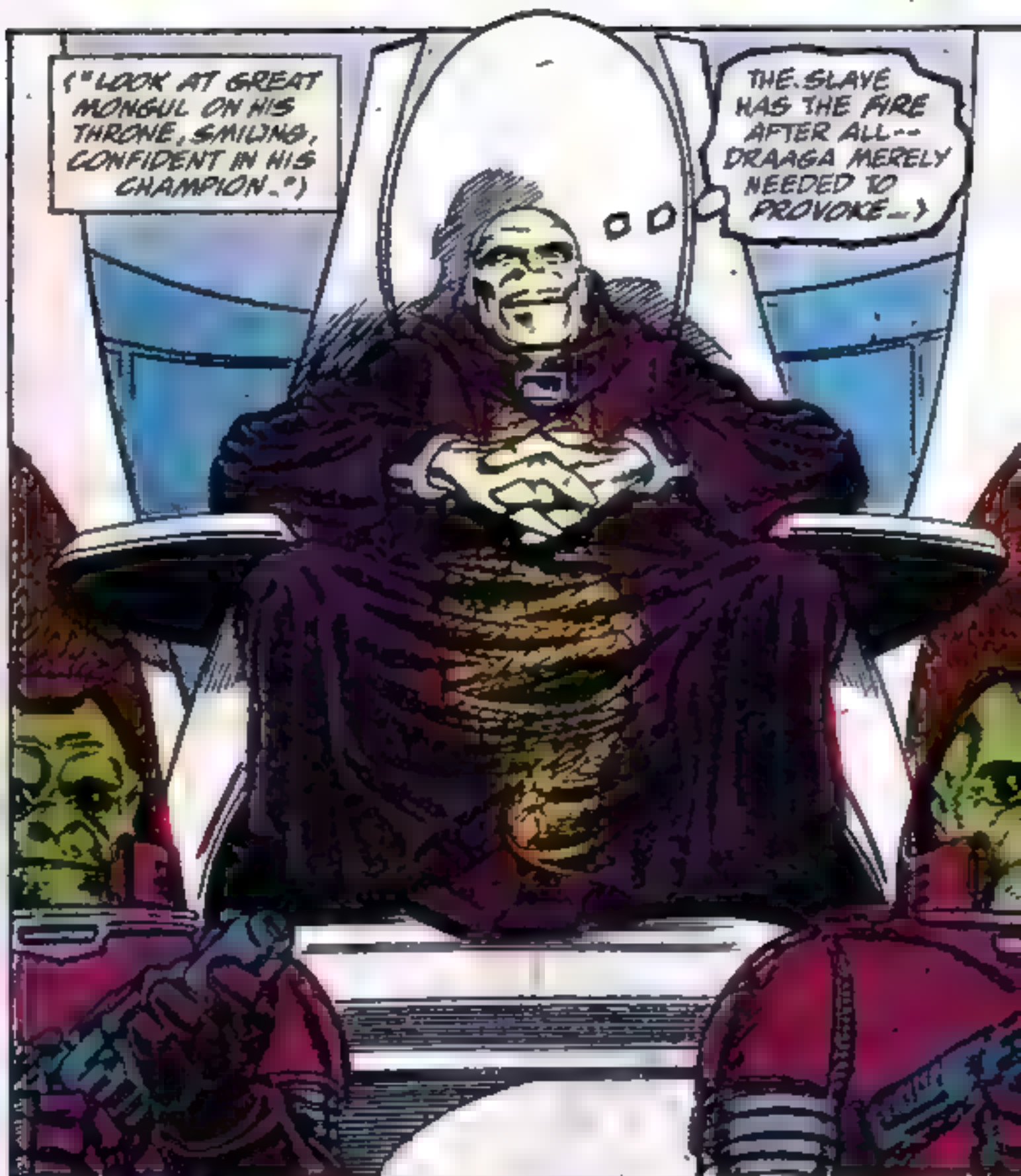


(HE'S AFTER BLOOD!)

(HE'LL KILL!)

(TEN UNITS SAYS HE WON'T!)

(DRAAGA IS NOT DEFEATED YET! HE'LL RALLY!)



("LOOK AT GREAT MONGUL ON HIS THRONE, SMILING, CONFIDENT IN HIS CHAMPION.")

THE SLAVE HAS THE FIRE AFTER ALL-- DRAAGA MERELY NEEDED TO PROVOKE--



("... MY SUBJECTS ARE ENTRANCED! THE KRYPTONIAN MUST DIE-- IF NOT BY DRAAGA'S HAND, THEN BY MINE!")

(IT IS DANGEROUS FOR MY CHARGE, WHEN THE CROWDS BACK HIM...)

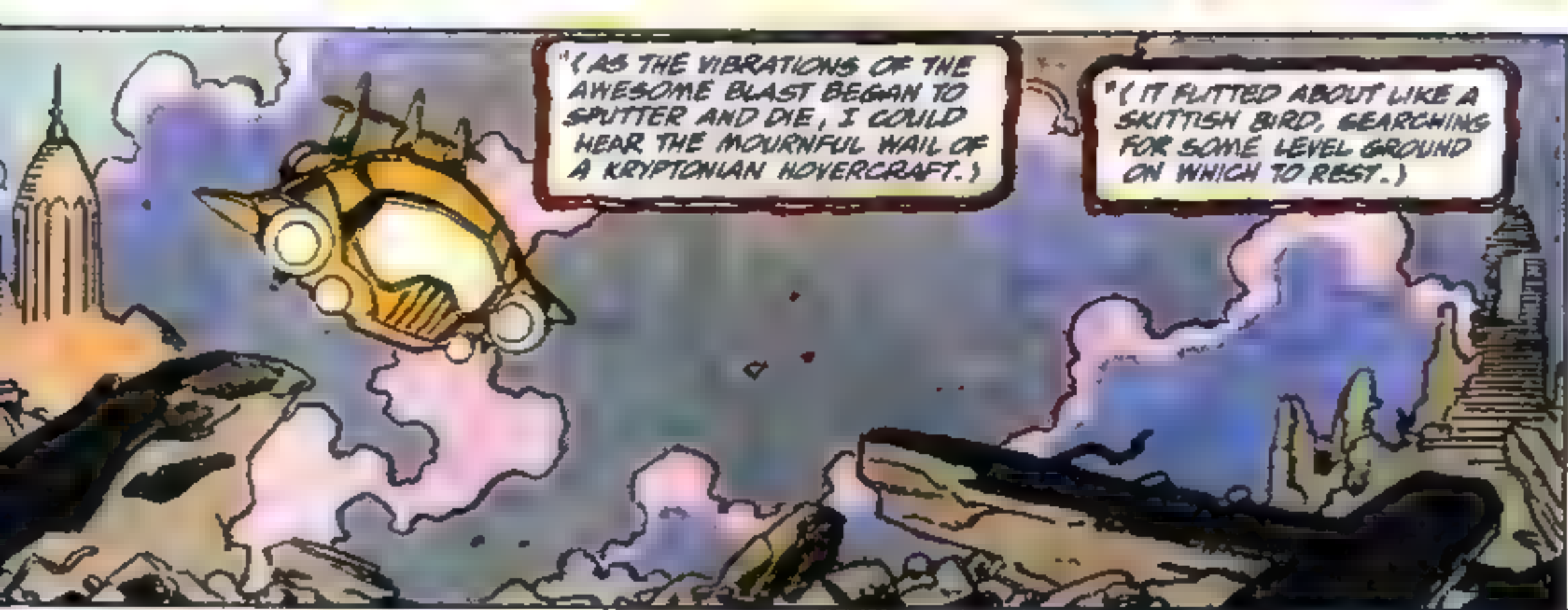


(THEY SEAL HIS FATE! MONGUL WILL NOT BE CHALLENGED BY HIS POPULARITY!)



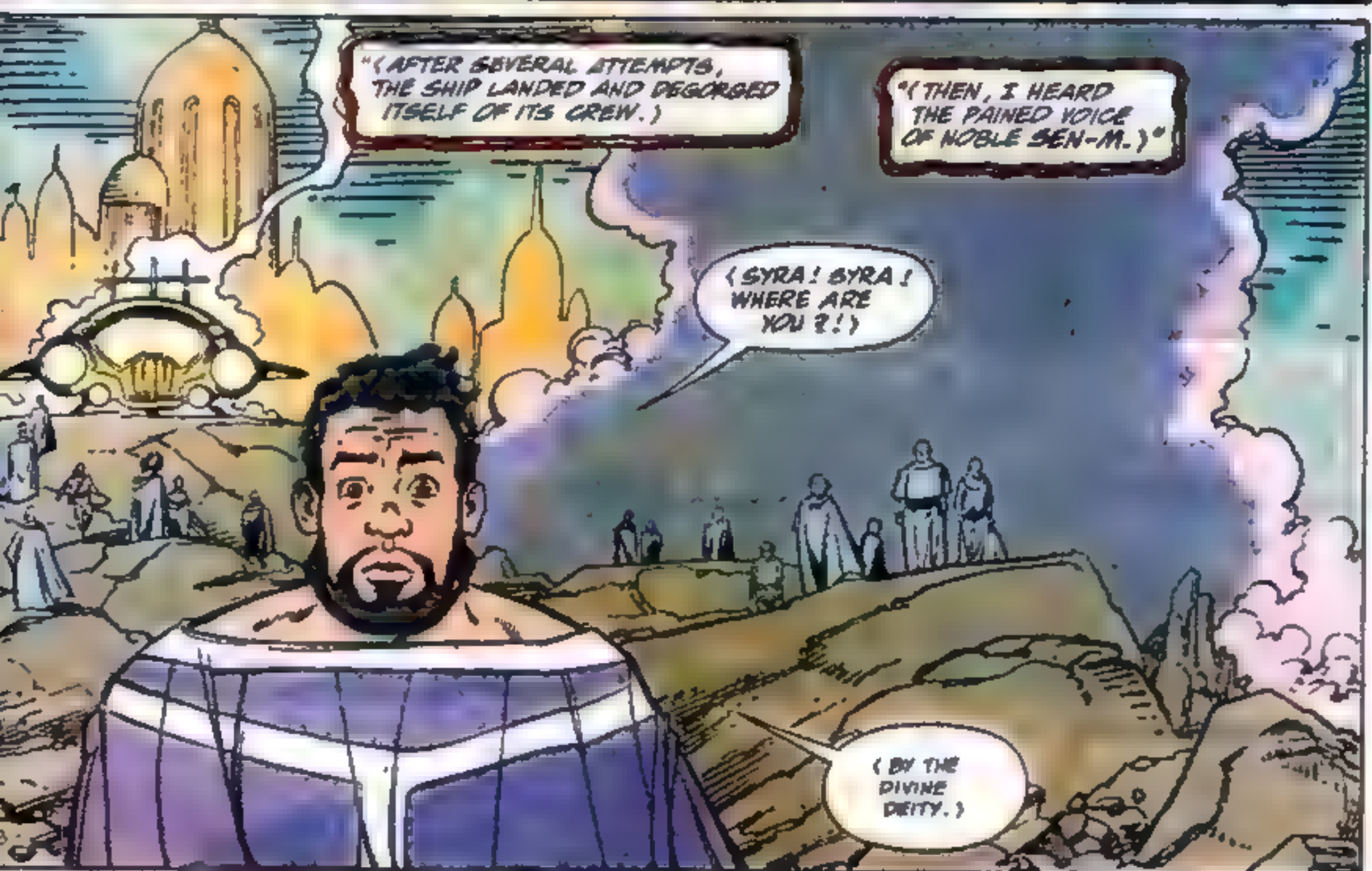
MY HEAD! NOT AGAIN--

--IMAGES FLOODING IN-- A SMOKING RUINS--



"(AS THE VIBRATIONS OF THE AWESOME BLAST BEGAN TO SPUTTER AND DIE, I COULD HEAR THE MOURNFUL WAIL OF A KRYPTONIAN HOVERCRAFT.)"

"(IT FLITTED ABOUT LIKE A SKITTISH BIRD, SEARCHING FOR SOME LEVEL GROUND ON WHICH TO REST.)"



"(AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS, THE SHIP LANDED AND DEGORGED ITSELF OF ITS CREW.)"

"(THEN, I HEARD THE PAINED VOICE OF NOBLE SEN-M.)"

"SYRA! SYRA! WHERE ARE YOU?!"

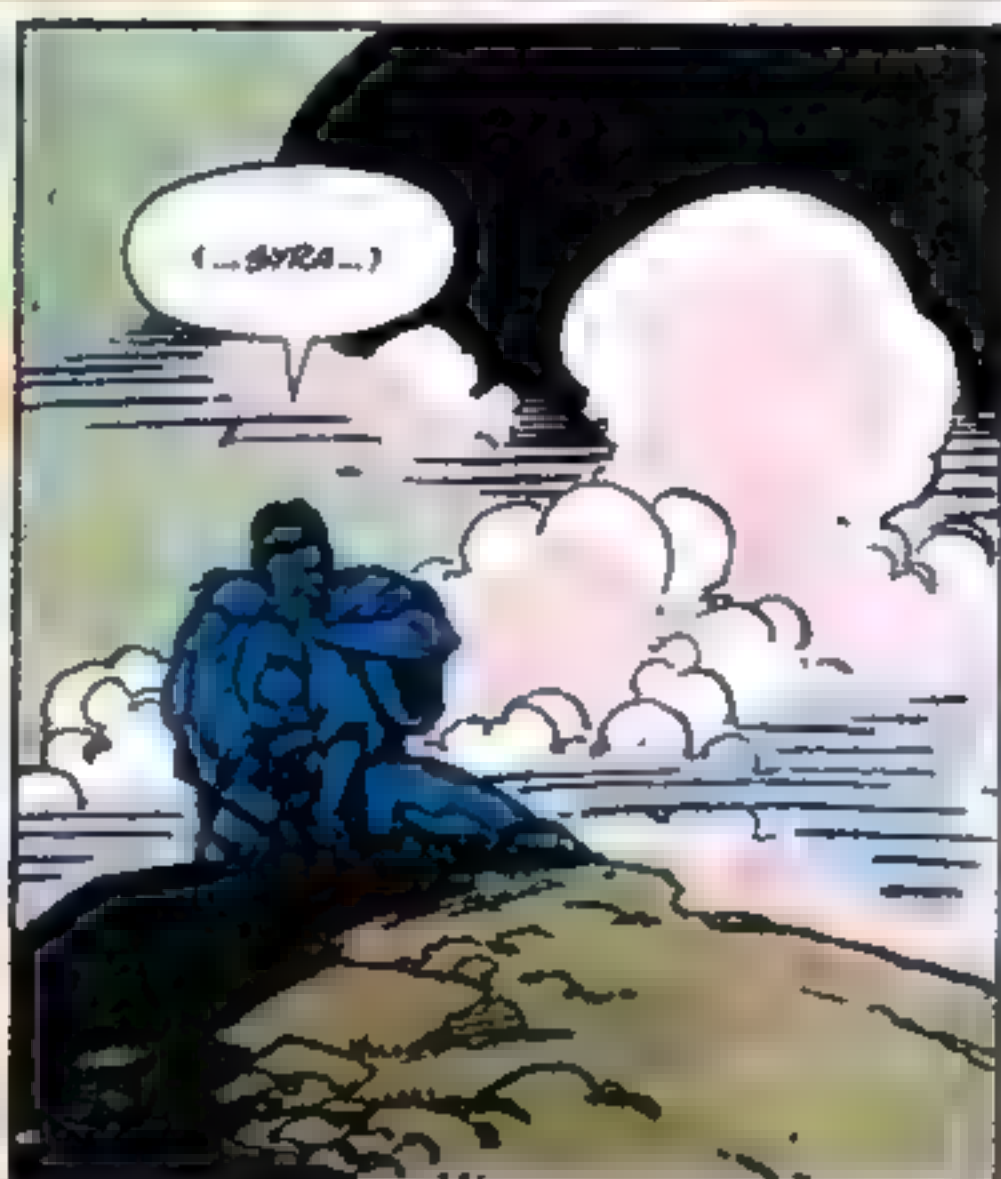
"(BY THE DIVINE DEITY.)"



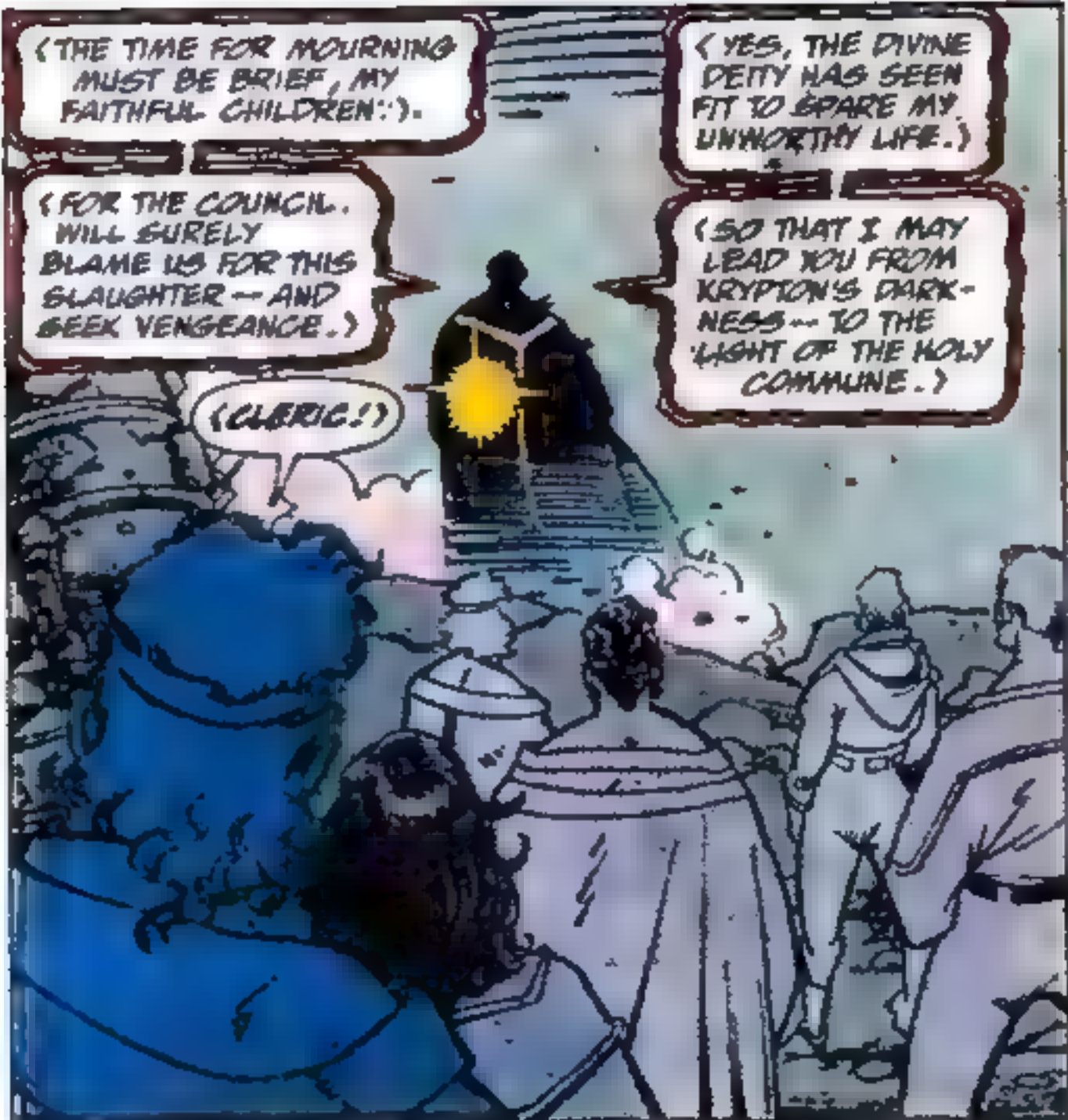
"(NO!!)"



"(SYRA!!)"



"(...SYRA...)"



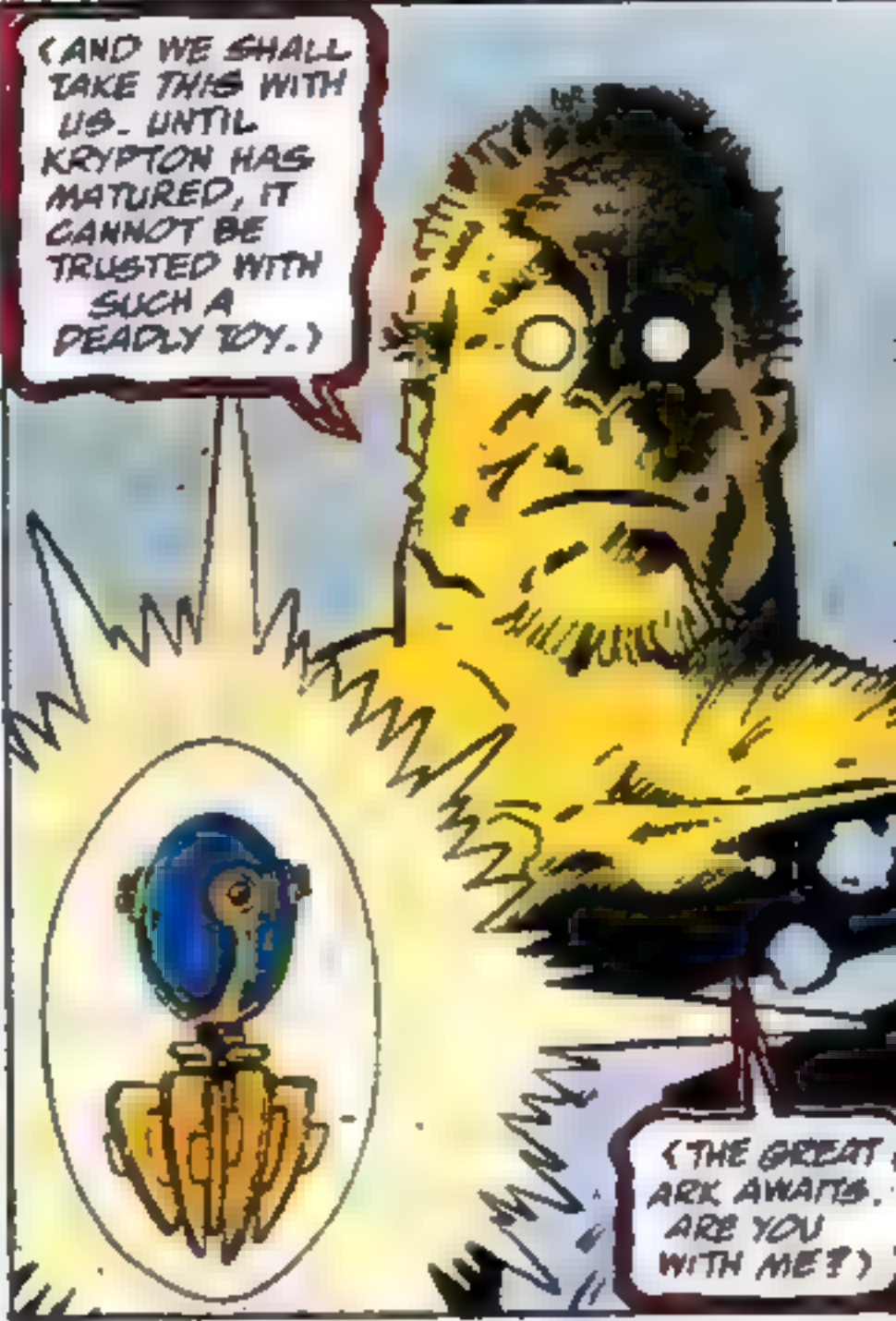
(THE TIME FOR MOURNING MUST BE BRIEF, MY FAITHFUL CHILDREN:).

(FOR THE COUNCIL WILL SURELY BLAME US FOR THIS SLAUGHTER -- AND SEEK VENGEANCE.)

(CLERIC!)

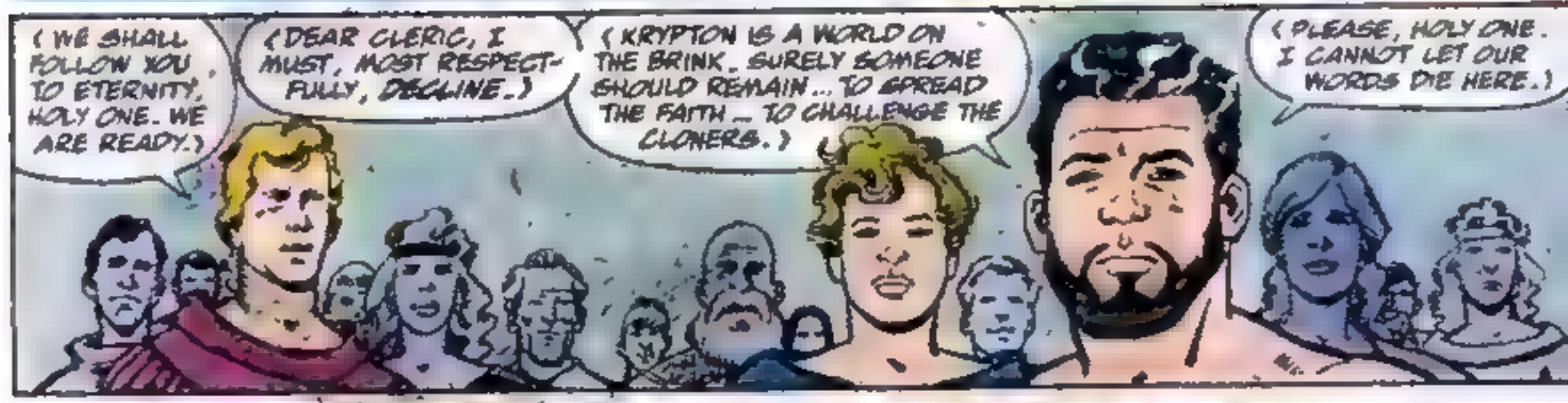
(YES, THE DIVINE DEITY HAS SEEN FIT TO SPARE MY UNWORTHY LIFE.)

(SO THAT I MAY LEAD YOU FROM KRYPTON'S DARKNESS -- TO THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY COMMUNE.)



(AND WE SHALL TAKE THIS WITH US. UNTIL KRYPTON HAS MATURED, IT CANNOT BE TRUSTED WITH SUCH A DEADLY TOY.)

(THE GREAT ARK AWAITS. ARE YOU WITH ME?)



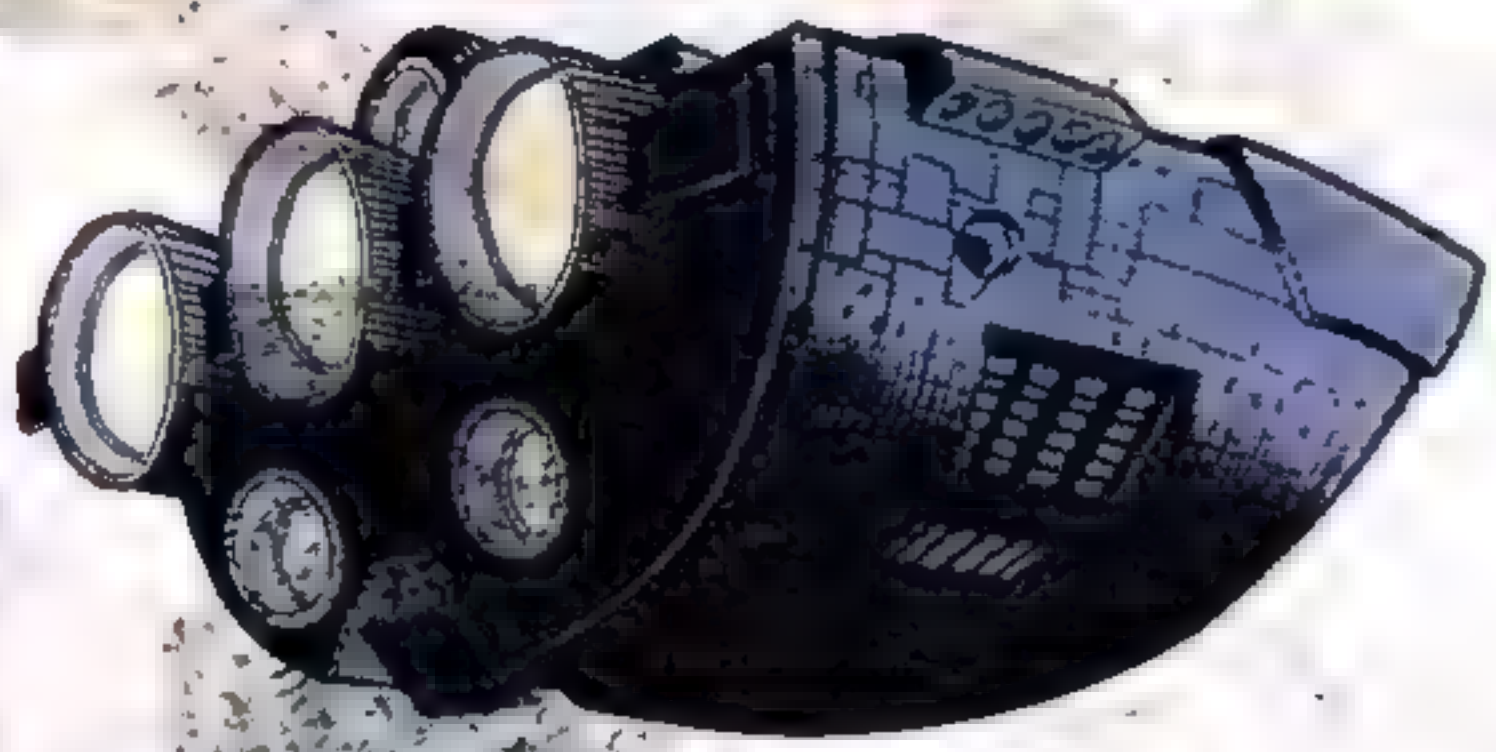
(WE SHALL FOLLOW YOU TO ETERNITY, HOLY ONE. WE ARE READY.)

(DEAR CLERIC, I MUST, MOST RESPECTFULLY, DECLINE.)

(KRYPTON IS A WORLD ON THE BRINK. SURELY SOMEONE SHOULD REMAIN... TO SPREAD THE FAITH -- TO CHALLENGE THE CLONERS.)

(PLEASE, HOLY ONE. I CANNOT LET OUR WORDS DIE HERE.)

"(SO, BEN-M AND HIS FELLOW APOSTLES REMAINED ON KRYPTON. I SORROWED AT LEAVING SUCH A GALLANT, LOYAL SOUL BEHIND, BUT I COULD NOT FORCE HIM TO GO AGAINST HIS OWN HEART.)"



"(WITH OVER A HUNDRED-THOUSAND KRYPTONIANS IN ITS BELLY, THE GREAT ARK CLIMBED INTO THE WAITING HEAVENS...)"

"(... FOUND FOR PARADISE...)"

"(... BUT DAMNED TO HELL...)"

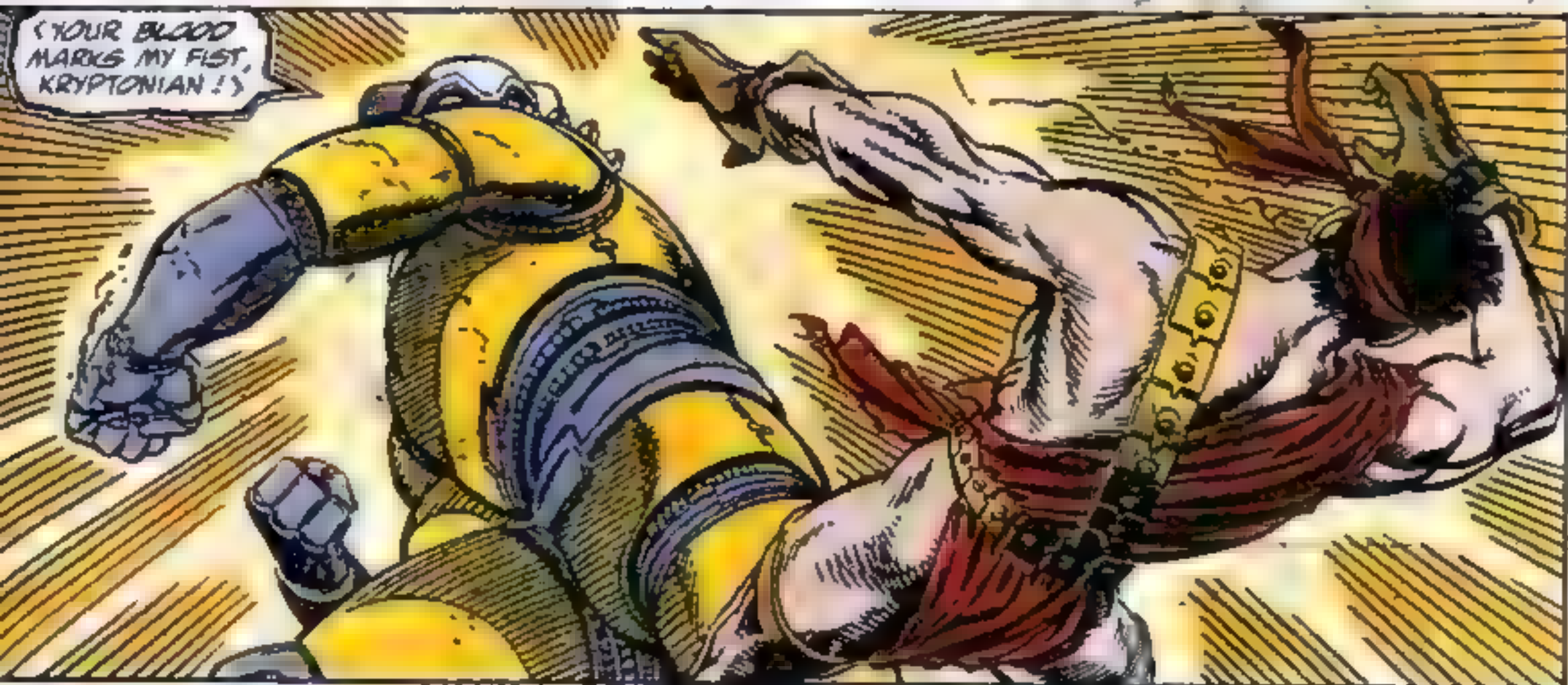
"THE SHIP--SO HUGE. WHY
DON'T I REMEMBER?"



"MY FATHER TOLD OF
KRYPTON'S HISTORY, BUT
THIS IMAGE IS NOT HIS!"



"YOUR BLOOD
MARKS MY FIST,
KRYPTONIAN!"

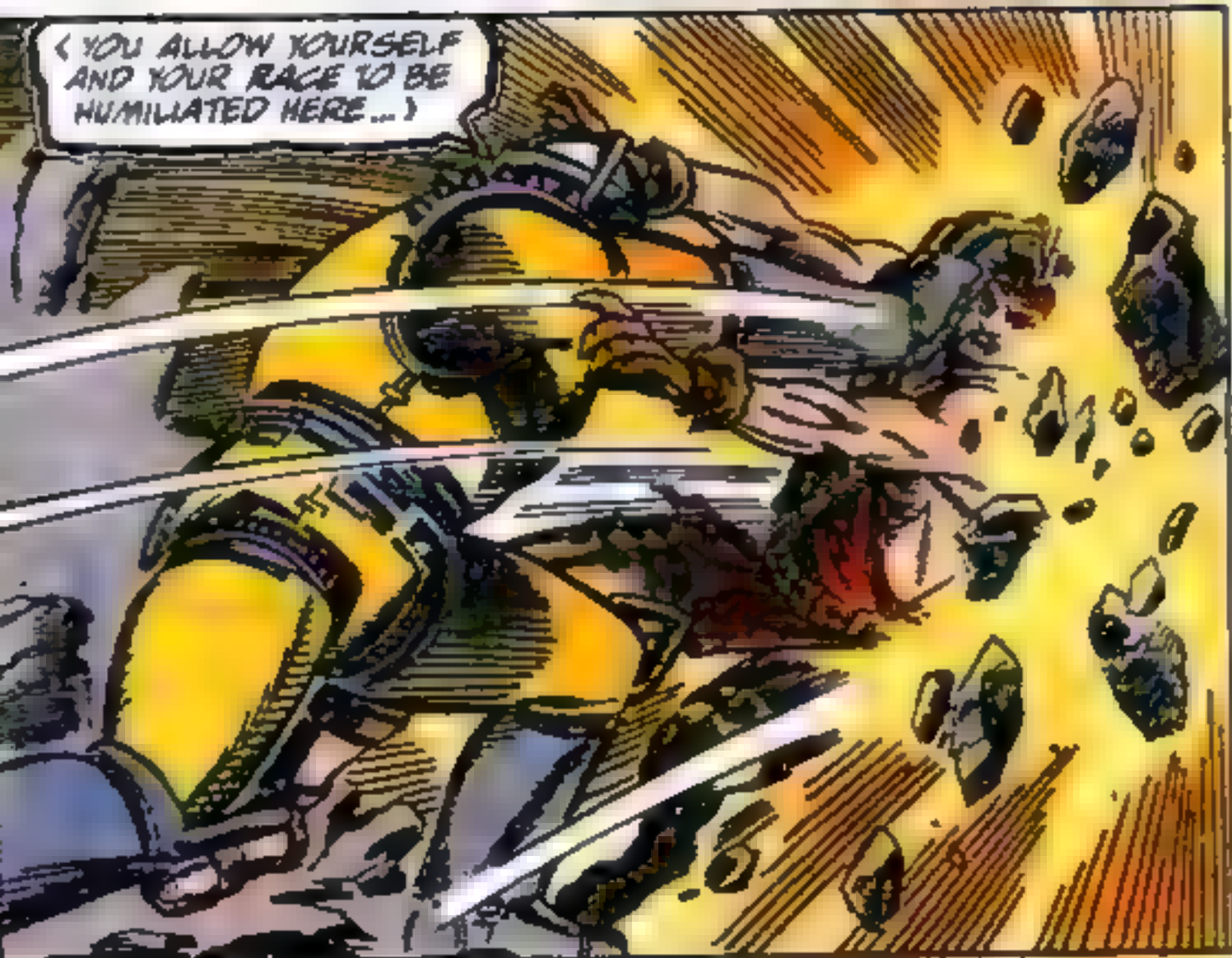


"(THE LAST BLOOD
OF YOUR LINE, YET
YOU HAVE NO FIGHT
LEFT FOR ME?)"



"THESE ARE NOT
MY MEMORIES!"





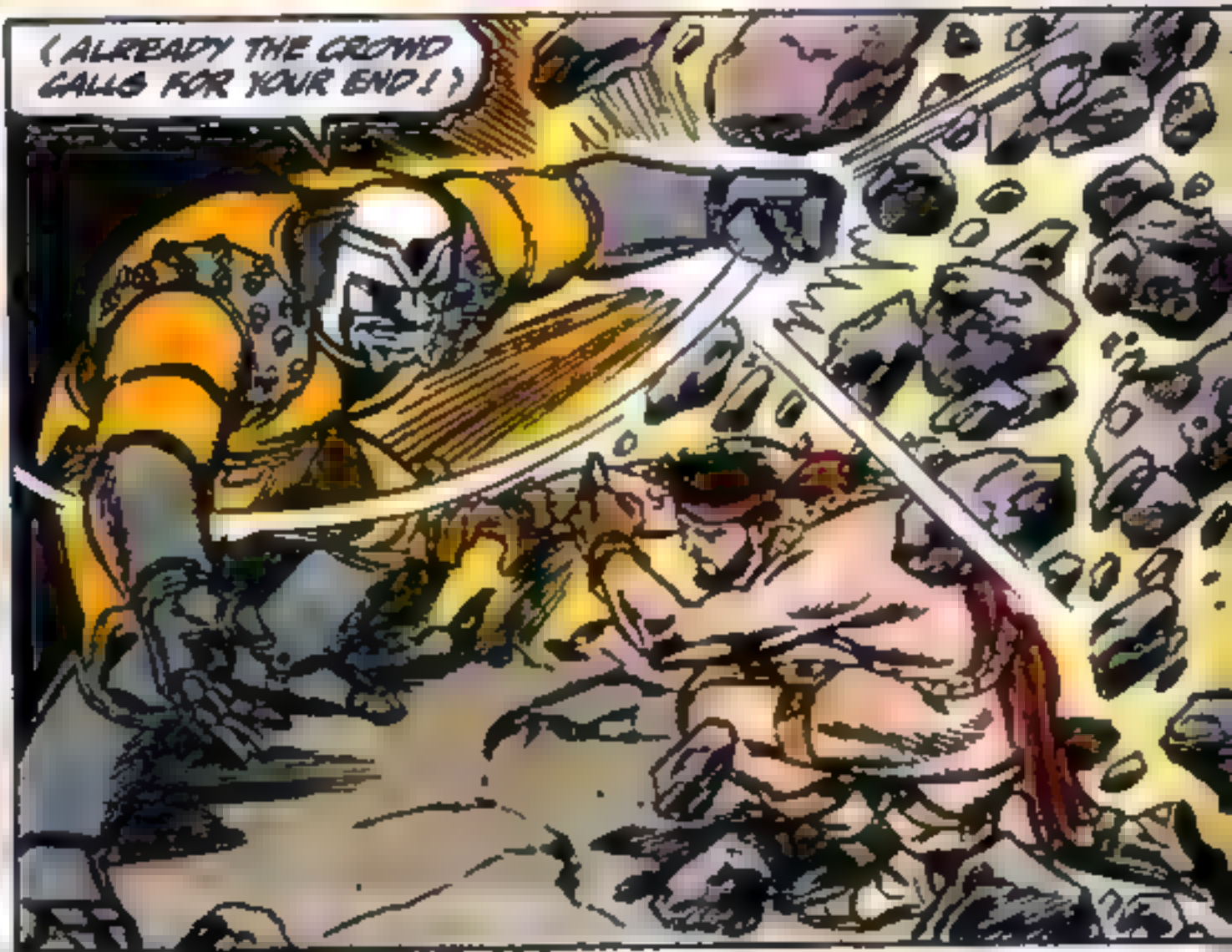
(YOU ALLOW YOURSELF
AND YOUR RACE TO BE
HUMILIATED HERE...)



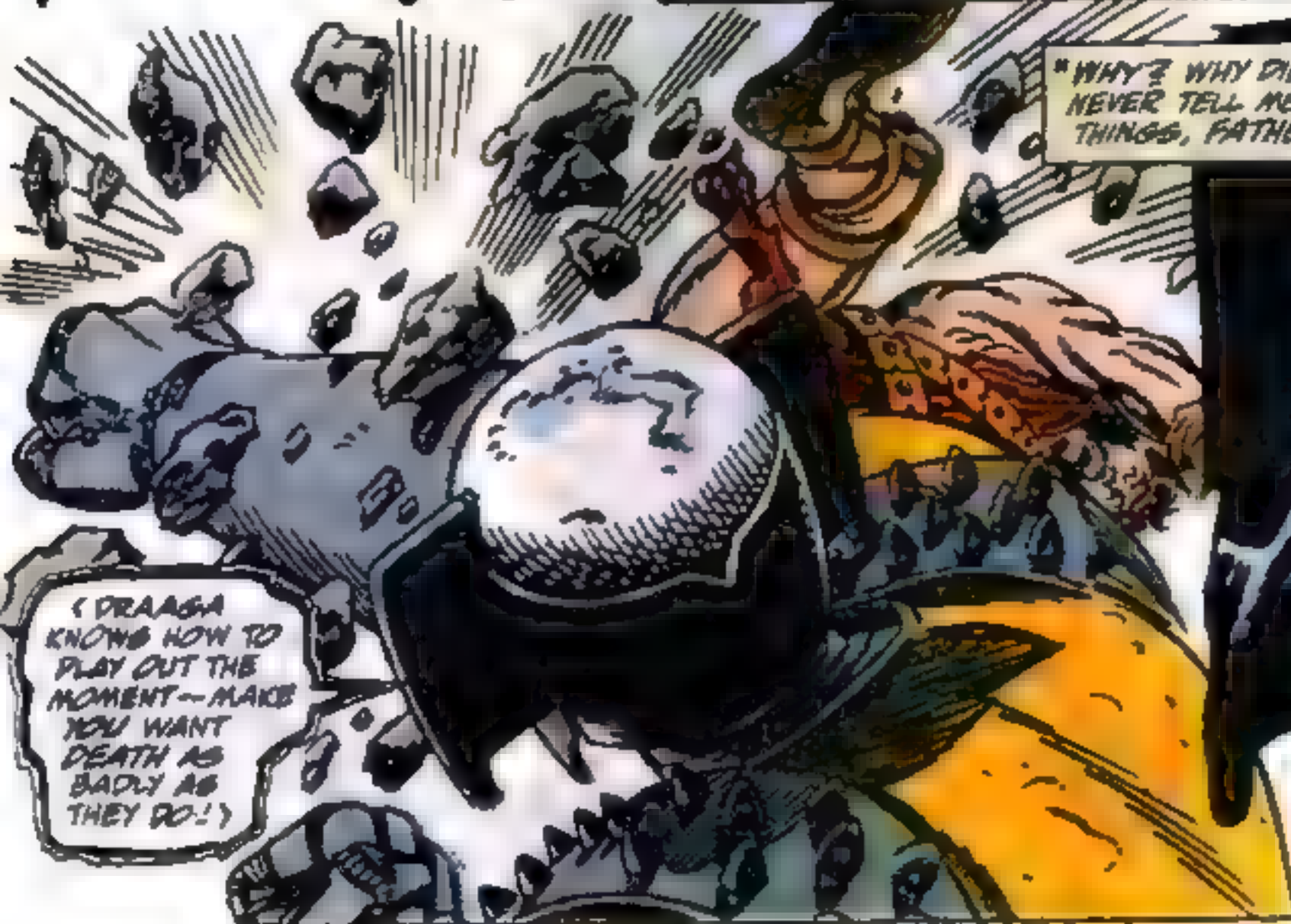
"THESE IMAGES ARE
HIS, THE INTRUDERS
-- NOT MY FATHER'S!"



"MEMORIES OF THINGS
FATHER NEVER TOLD ME..."

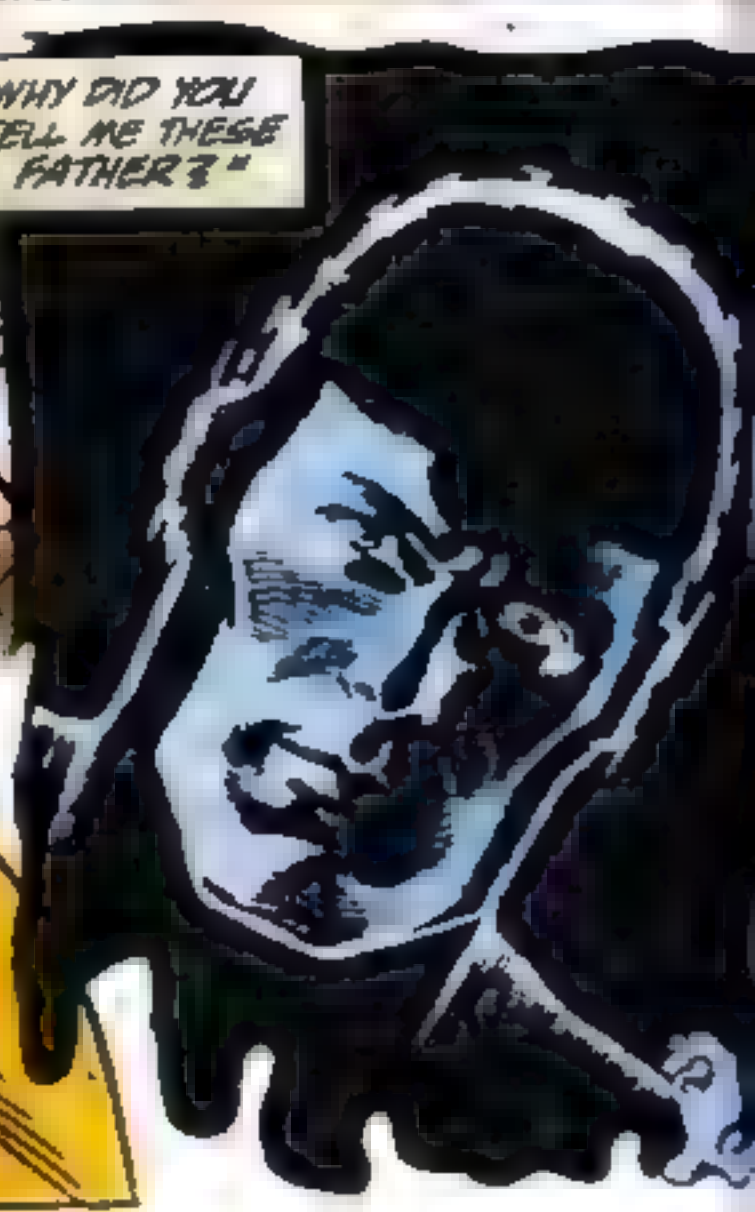


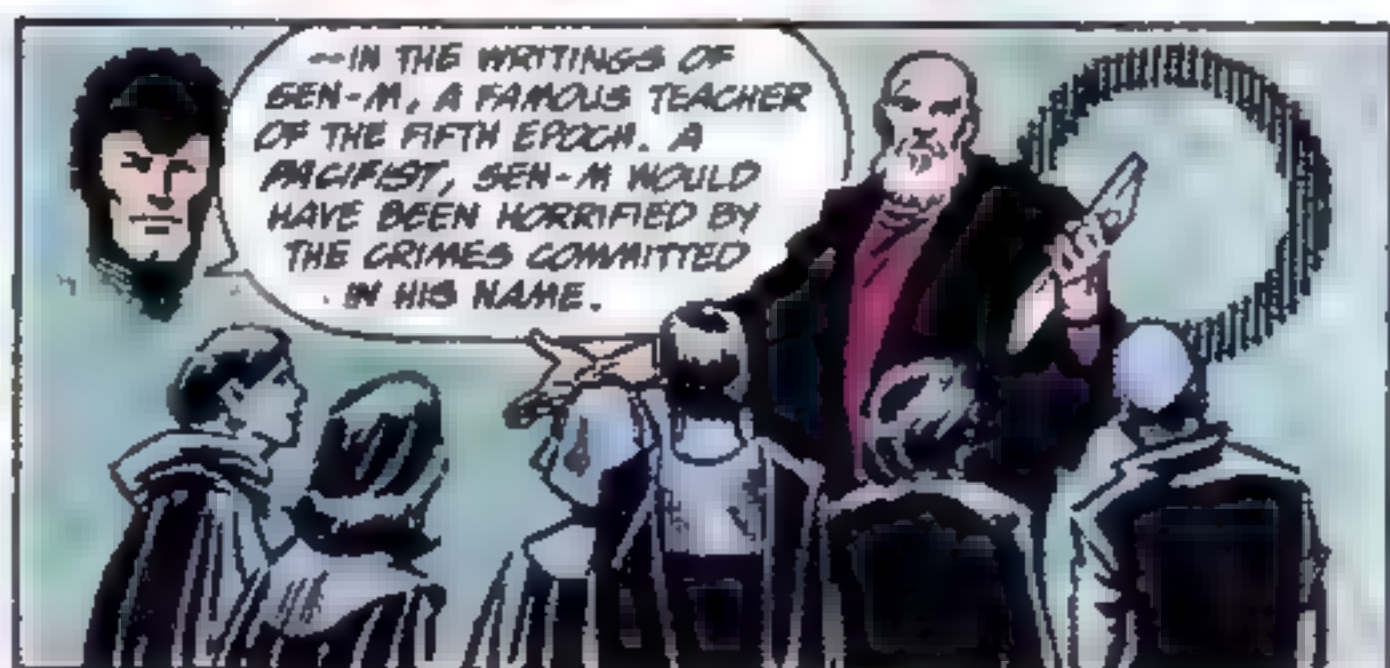
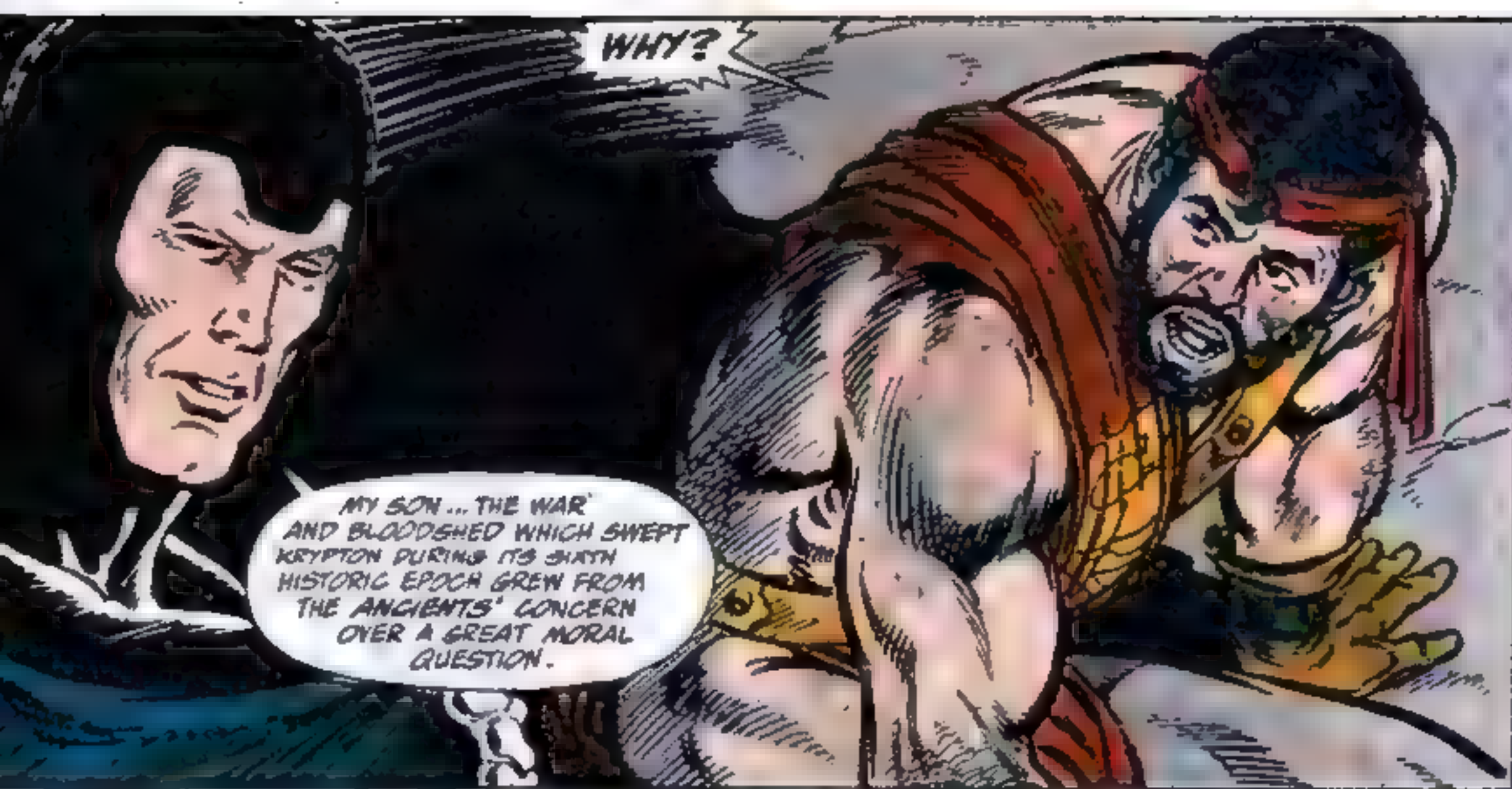
(ALREADY THE CROWD
CALLS FOR YOUR END!)



(DRAAGA
KNOWS HOW TO
PLAY OUT THE
MOMENT-- MAKE
YOU WANT
DEATH AS
BADLY AS
THEY DO!)

"WHY? WHY DID YOU
NEVER TELL ME THESE
THINGS, FATHER?"





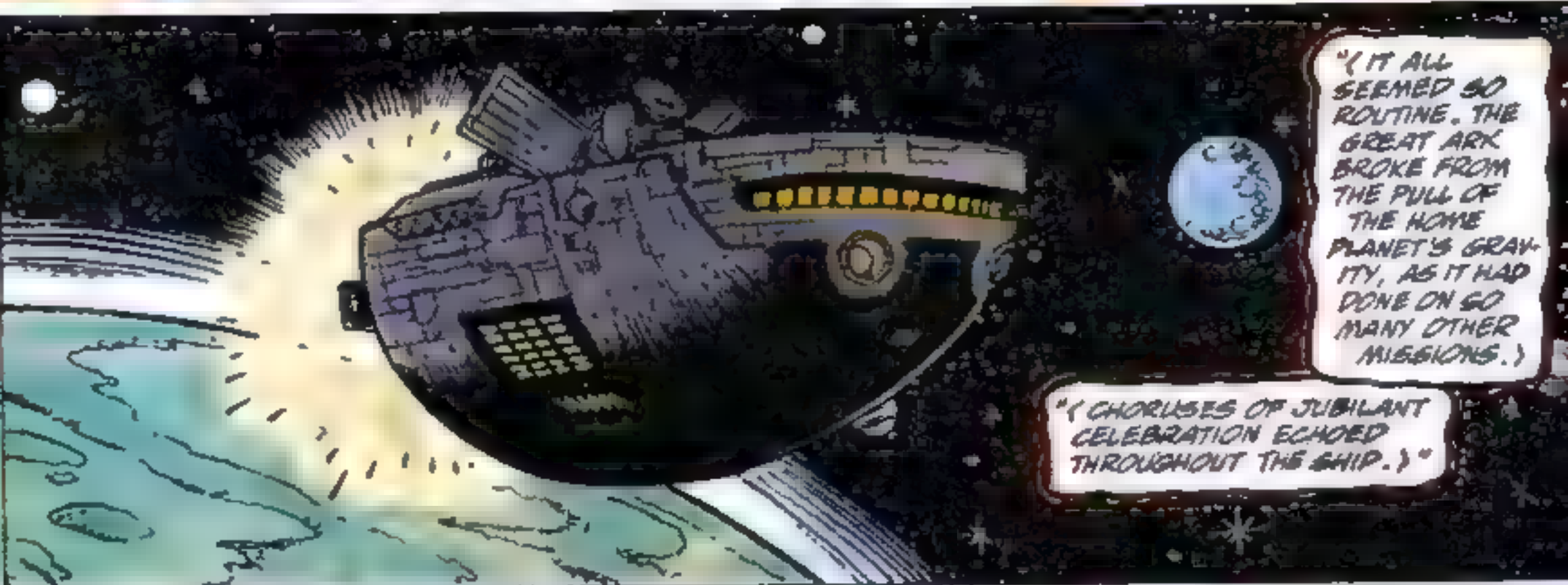


(SO... THAT IS THE SOLE SUM OF MY MISSION TO KRYPTON...)

(A MERE QUESTION MARK IN THE DATABANKS OF HISTORY... FORGOTTEN... DISAVOWED...)

(A FITTING PUNISHMENT, I SUPPOSE...)

(AFTER WHAT HAPPENED ON THE ARK, IT WOULD HAVE SERVED THE DIVINE DEITY BETTER IF I HAD NEVER EXISTED.)



(IT ALL SEEMED SO ROUTINE. THE GREAT ARK BROKE FROM THE PULL OF THE HOME PLANET'S GRAVITY, AS IT HAD DONE ON SO MANY OTHER MISSIONS.)

(CHORUSES OF JUBILANT CELEBRATION ECHOED THROUGHOUT THE SHIP.)



(HOW ONE, WE ARE SO EXCITED! HOW LONG WILL THIS JOURNEY BE?)

(MY WIFE AND I LOOK FORWARD TO RAISING OUR CHILD ON THE HOLY SOIL!)

(IT WAS SO WONDERFUL...)



(BUT THEN, IT ALL ENDED...)

(CLERIC... I-I FEEL... STRANGE...)

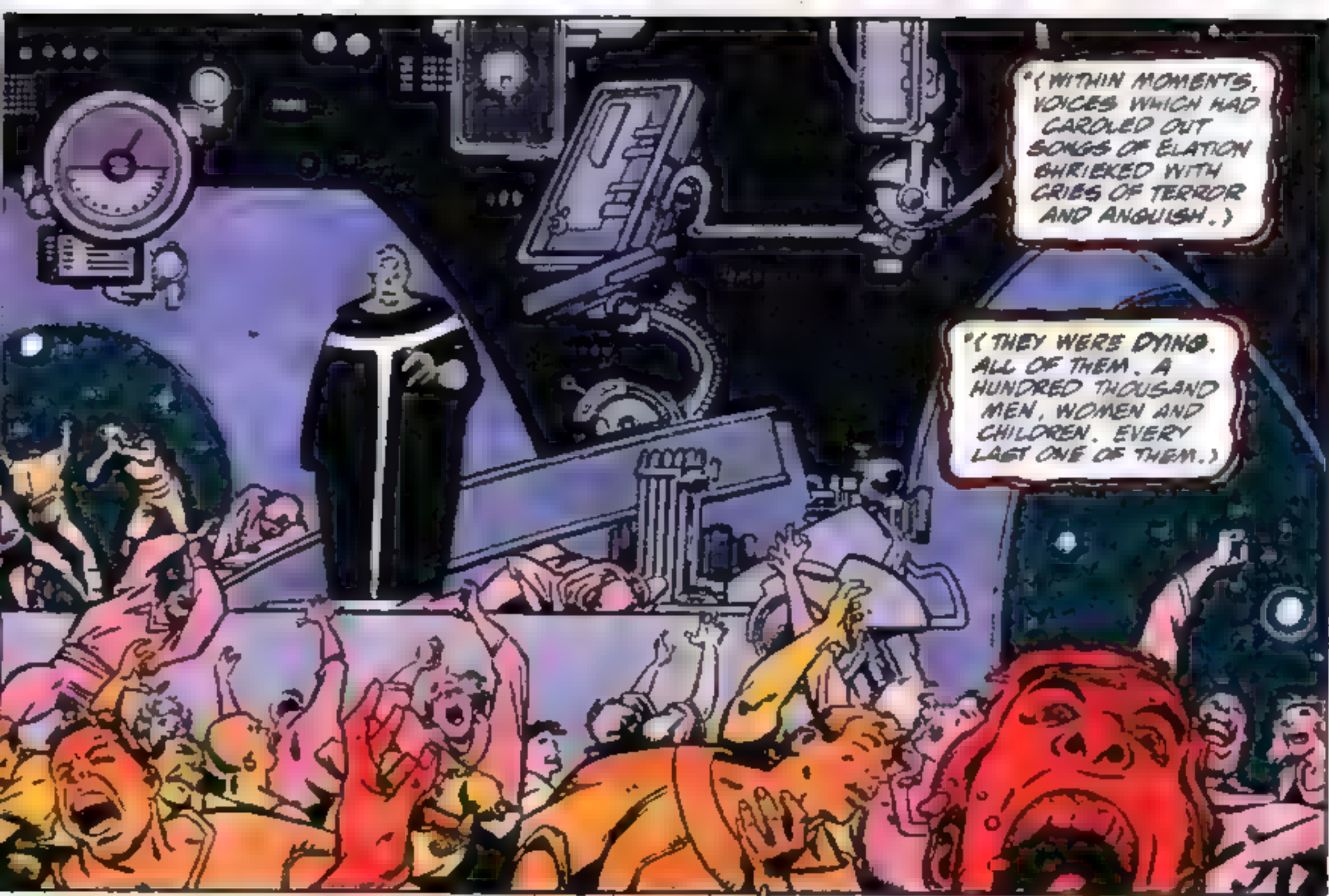
(TYR-N! WHAT'S WRONG?!)

(PAIN... OH... SUCH... PAIN...)



(...HORRIBLY... SUDDENLY...)

(TYR-N!)



"(WITHIN MOMENTS,
VOICES WHICH HAD
CAROLED OUT
SONGS OF ELATION
SHRIEKED WITH
CRIES OF TERROR
AND ANGUISH.)

"(THEY WERE DYING.
ALL OF THEM. A
HUNDRED THOUSAND
MEN, WOMEN AND
CHILDREN. EVERY
LAST ONE OF THEM.)



"(I WIELDED ALL
MY MYSTIC POWER,
POWER ENDOWED
ME BY THE HOLY
TRIBUNAL ITSELF.)

"(... BUT IT WAS
USELESS)

"(AGAIN AND AGAIN --
) SHOUTING --
RANG OUT... THE ANCIENT
KRYPTONIAN DEATH
CHANT.)



"(AND WITH
EACH CRY,
MY HEART
SHATTERED
ALL THE
MORE.)

"(THOSE WHO LINGERED JOINED
ME IN PRAYER -- BUT THE DIVINE
DEITY HAD ABANDONED US.
SOON, THEY, TOO, WERE DEAD.)



"(BUT WHY?
THERE HAD TO
BE SOME
EXPLANATION...)

"(AFTER
EXAMINING
THE BODIES,
I FOUND
IT.) "

"KAL-EL, MY SON, THERE IS A DEFECT IN THE KRYPTONIAN GENOTYPE WHICH HAS TIED US TO THIS PLANET. TO LEAVE OUR WORLD'S ENVIRONS HAS MEANT DEATH."

"TREATMENTS THAT I TOOK PRIOR TO YOUR CONCEPTION HAVE ELIMINATED THAT DEFECT IN YOU. I HAD HOPES THAT YOU WOULD TAKE KRYPTON TO THE STARS, BUT NOW..."

"THERE IS MUCH I WOULD SAY TO YOU, AND SO LITTLE TIME."

"OUR ANCESTORS THOUGHT THEY HAD ENDED THE MENACE OF BLACK ZERO EONS AGO, BUT BEFORE ITS DEMISE, THAT CULT HAD TRIGGERED A NUCLEAR DEVICE--"

"--WHICH, I BELIEVE, STARTED A CHAIN REACTION DEEP WITHIN OUR PLANET'S CORE, CREATING A NEW AND DEADLY RADIOACTIVE ELEMENT."

"TWENTY MILLION KRYPTONIANS HAVE DIED WITHIN THE PAST CYCLE."

"KRYPTON IS KILLING US."

"TODAY, MY FEARS WERE CONFIRMED"

"KRYPTON ITSELF WILL SOON DIE."

"ONLY YOU CAN ESCAPE OUR DOOM. THESE PAST MONTHS, MY ROBOTS HAVE CONSTRUCTED THE STAR DRIVE I DESIGNED YEARS AGO."

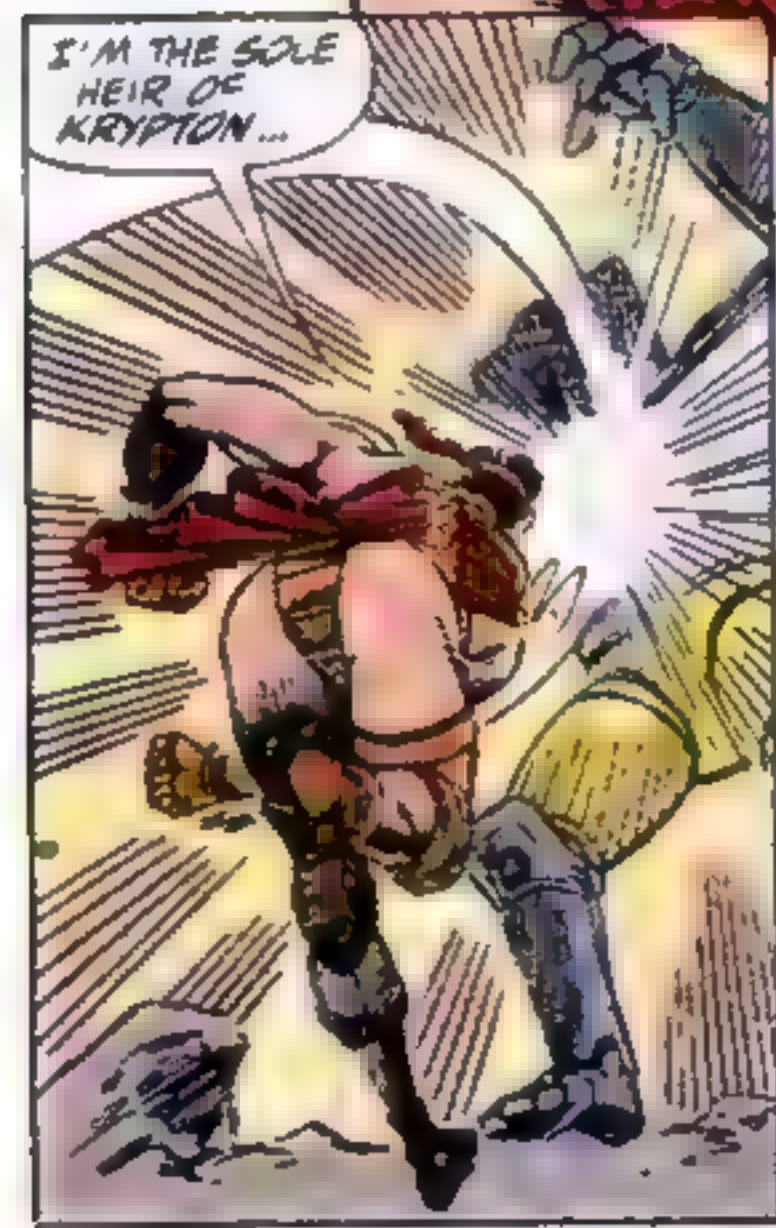
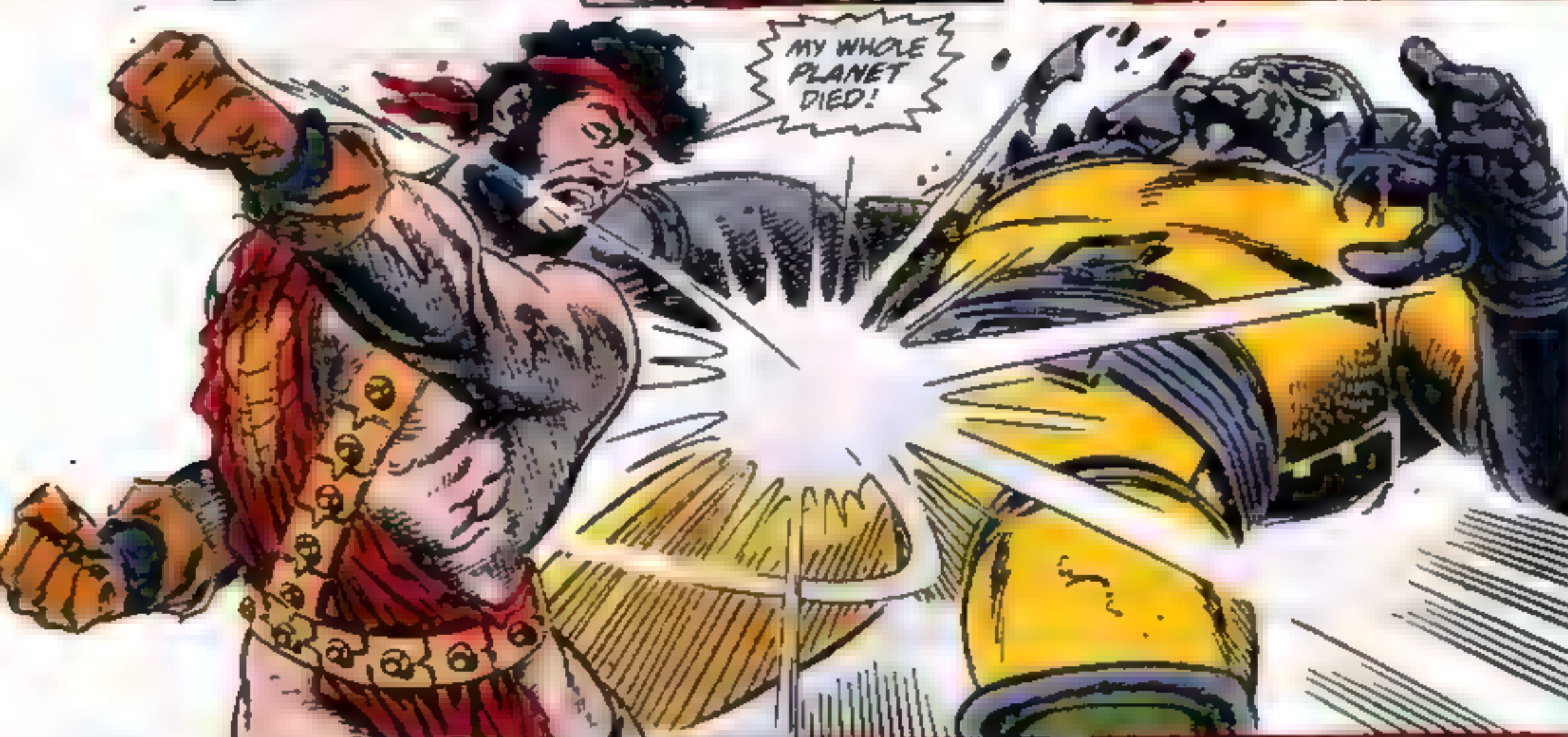
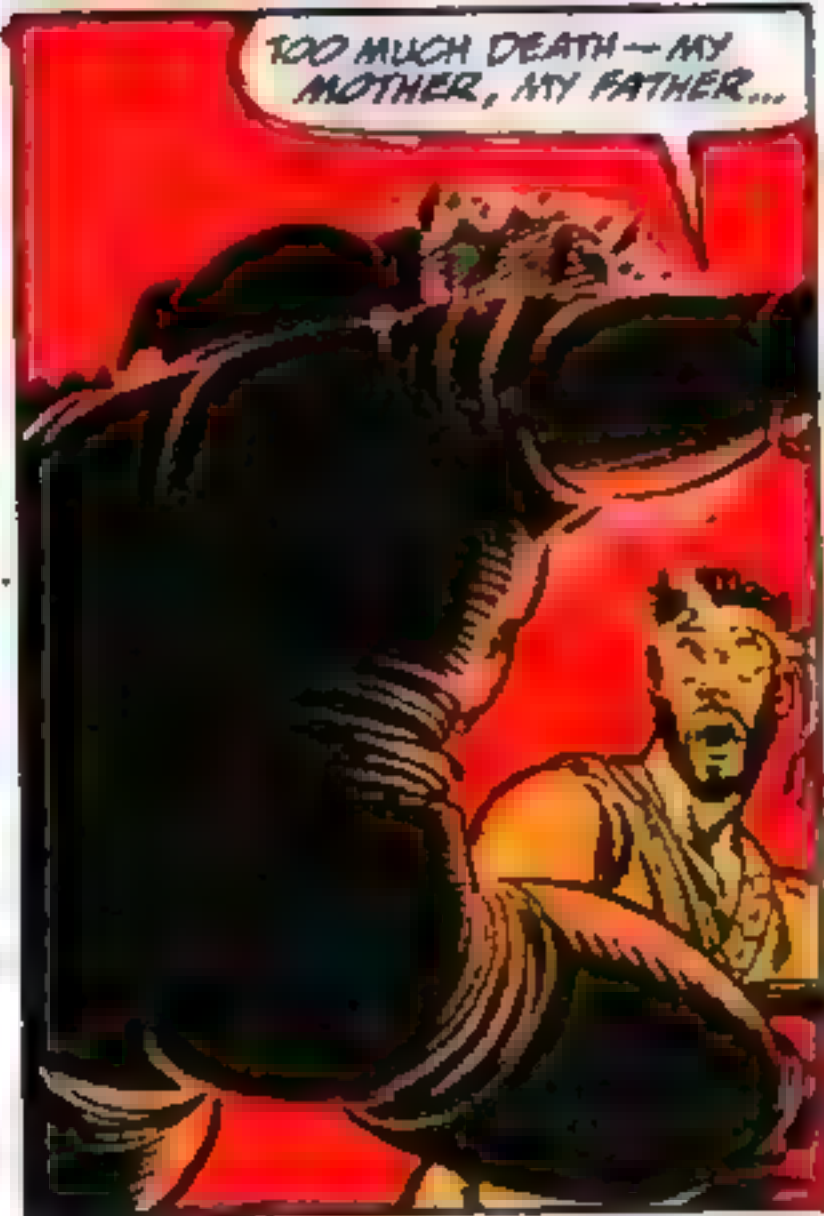
"YOUR MOTHER HAS JOINED ME... SHE KNOWS WHAT I HAVE DONE, AND--IN HER OWN WAY-- I THINK SHE UNDERSTANDS"

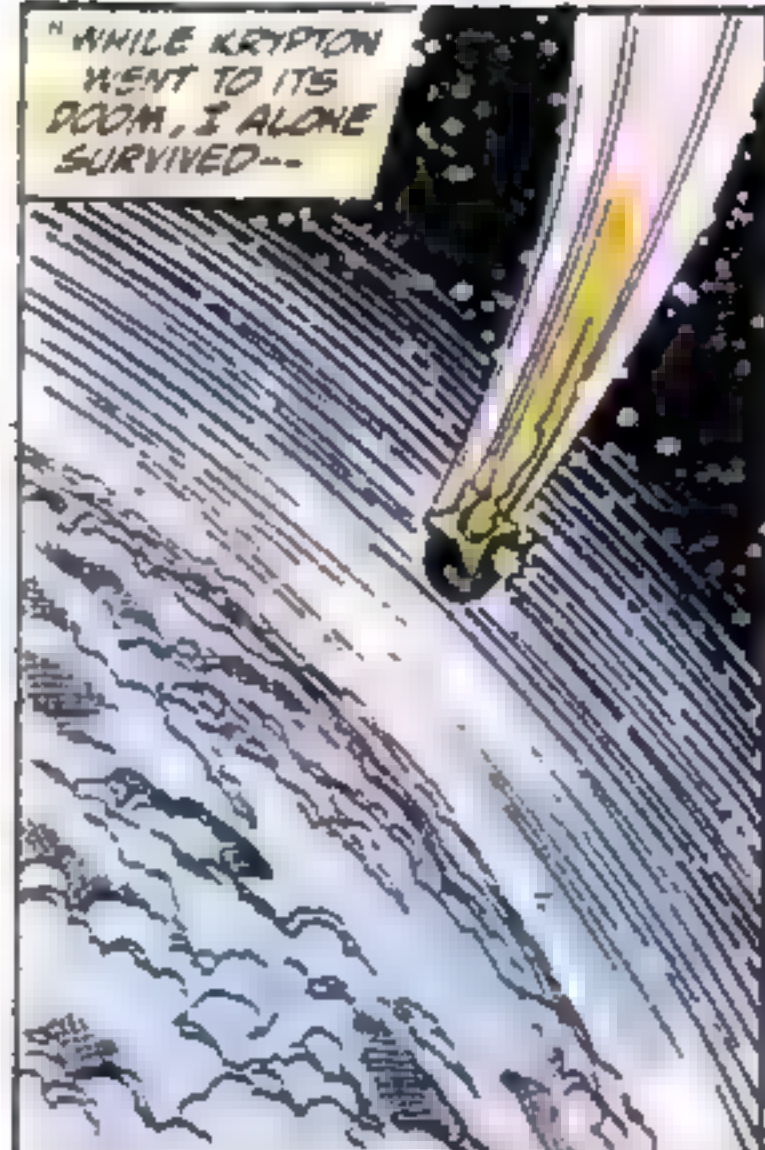
"I HAVE BEAMED THIS RECORDING OF MY THOUGHTS AND DREAMS INTO THE VEHICLE WHICH WILL CARRY YOUR BIRTHING MATRIX TO A NEW WORLD, THAT YOU MAY ONE DAY LEARN OF US."

"YOUR MOTHER AND I SHALL FACE DEATH TOGETHER IN PRAYER..."

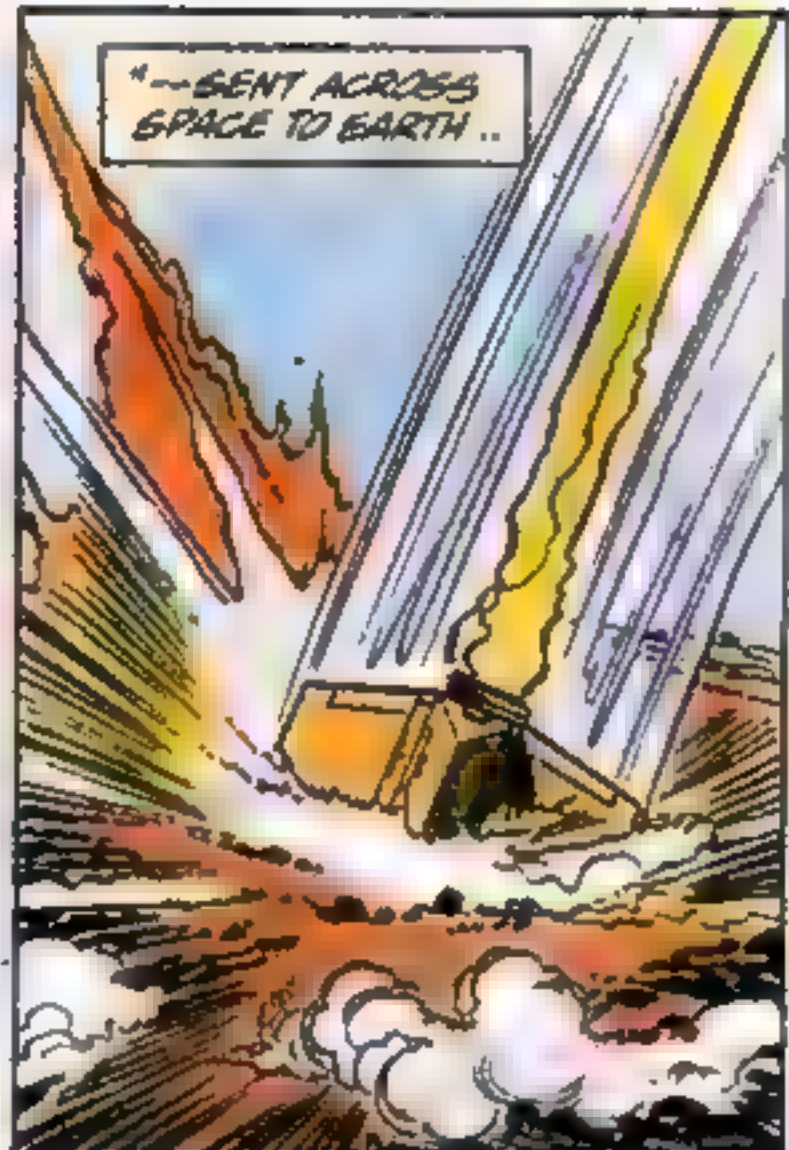
"REMEMBER US"

"FAREWELL."





"WHILE KRYPTON WENT TO ITS DOOM, I ALONE SURVIVED--"



"--SENT ACROSS SPACE TO EARTH.."



".. THERE TO BE BORN AND RAISED A MAN!"

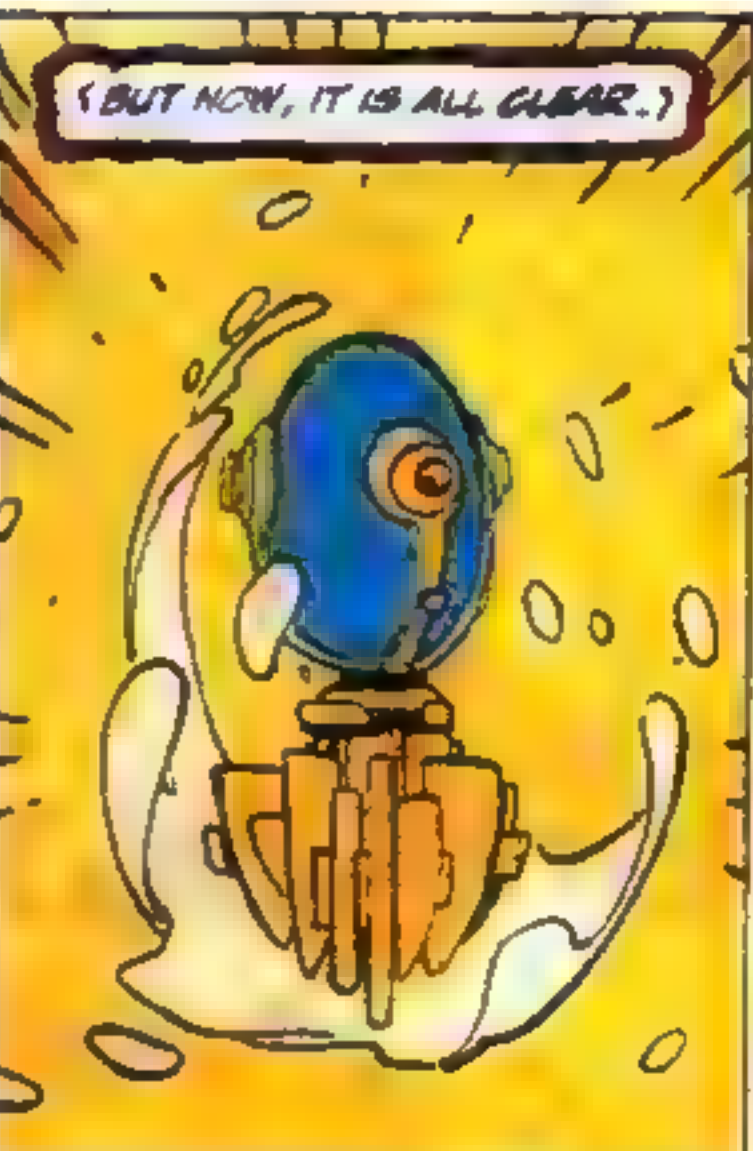


(I HAD DISGRACED MY FAITH. I COULDN'T GO BACK TO THE COMMUNE.)

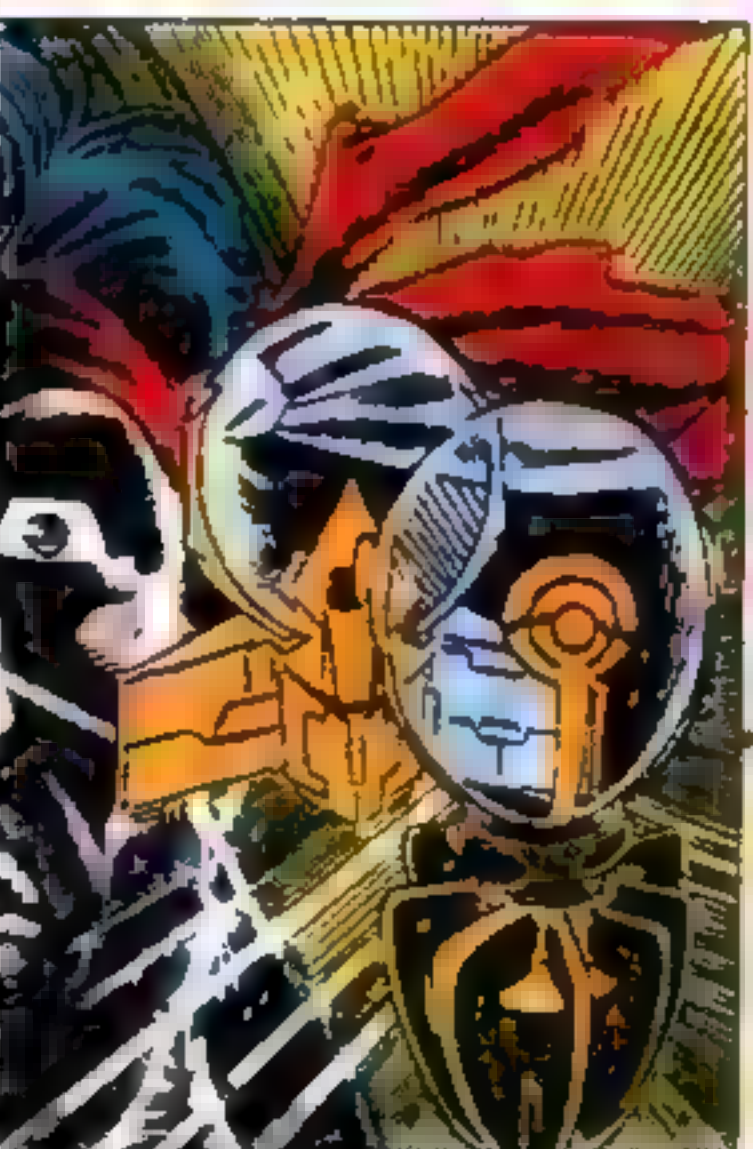
(SO I CAME HERE, AND BECAME AS THE ROCK-- COLD AND LIFELESS. AND EONS OLD.)



(AND DURING ALL THOSE EONS, THE ERADICATOR HAS REMAINED WITH ME. I NEVER REALLY KNEW WHY I'D KEPT IT FOR SO LONG.)



(BUT NOW, IT IS ALL CLEAR.)





(YOU HAVE VANQUISHED MY CHAMPION, SLAVE! NOW KILL HIM AND HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF PRESENTING TO ME HIS HEAD!)

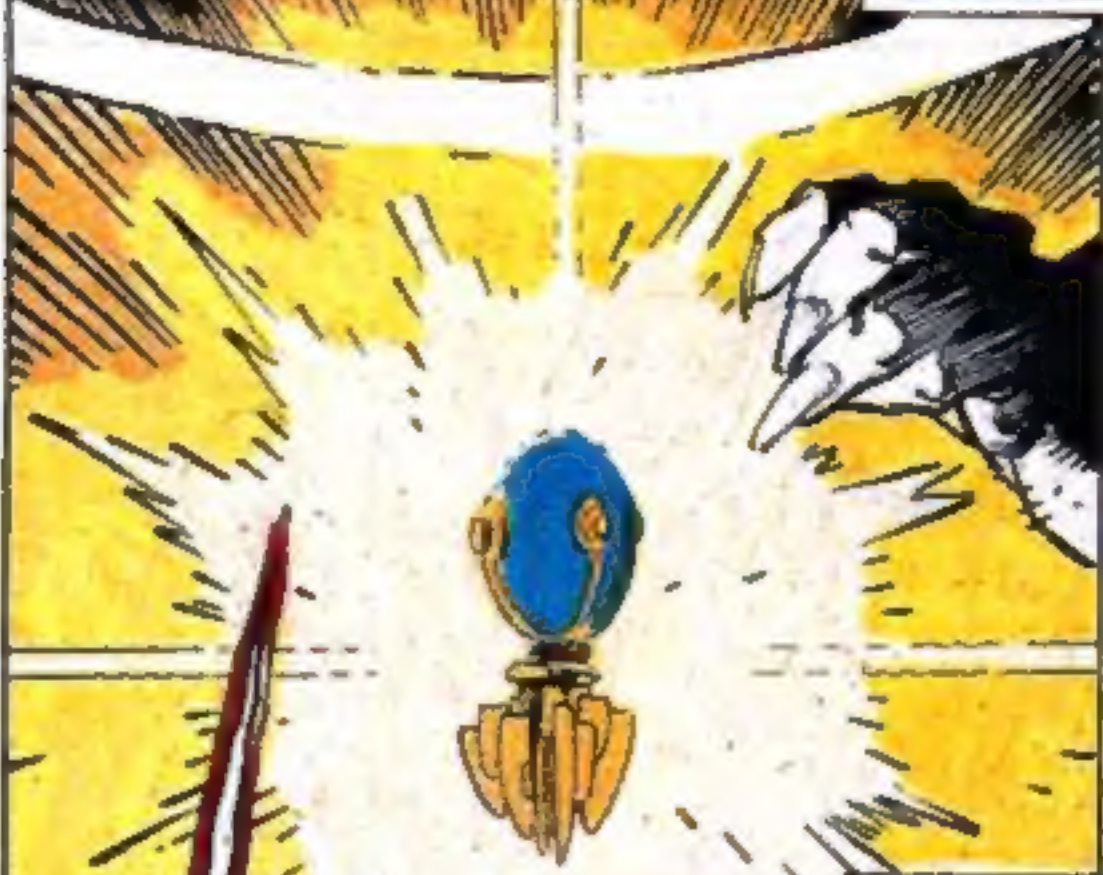


MY NAME, TYRANT, IS SUPERMAN-- AND I DON'T KILL!

< THE ERADICATOR
AND THE MATRIX-
CRAFT--THE RESEM-
BLANCE IS NOT A
COINCIDENCE. AND
THE KRYPTONIAN
DEATH CRY ... >



< YOUR REFUSAL LEAVES
ME NO RECOURSE BUT
TO KILL YOU BOTH
MYSELF! >



< IT'S TRUE!
AFTER ALL
THESE CEN-
TURIES, MY
PRAYERS HAVE
FINALLY BEEN
ANSWERED! >

< HEAR ME,
LAST SON OF
KRYPTON!
AND BEAR
WITNESS TO
...YOUR
DESTINY! >



I'M NOT
AFRAID OF YOU,
MONGUL! COME
DOWN FROM
THAT THRONE
OF YOURS AND
FACE ME ONE
ON ONE!

TO BE CONTINUED
IN THE PAGES OF
SUPERMAN #32!

ON SALE
NEXT WEEK!

HOW I SPENT MY SUPER-SUMMER VACATION

by George Pérez

There I was, Cleveland, Ohio, the Superman Expo, June 16th, 1988. You know, somehow it all seemed so appropriate.

Just a couple of months before, I had agreed to write and draw a new Superman title for editor Mike Carlin. I guess one of the reasons I accepted the project was that I was just so flattered by the request. When Mike offered me the job, he was not asking for George Pérez the artist, but rather George Pérez the writer. Considering that, at the time, I had only been scripting for a year, it was very ego-gratifying. Maybe that's what Mike was counting on. When I opted to lay out the series artistically as well, I think it was more than even Mike was expecting. I suppose that, deep down, every cartoonist yearns to get at least ONE crack at drawing Superman. Now all Mike had to do was get all us creators together in one place to get the ball rolling.

Which is why we were in Cleveland, to discuss plans for Superman and my involvement with the character. What better place to chart Superman's future than the city of his birth? What better time than that Super-Summer, the celebration of his 50th birthday?

That fateful night in June was like a dream come true for me. There we all were, sitting at the Watermark Restaurant down by the pier. Sitting next to me was one of my all-time idols in the business, the man many consider to be THE Superman artist—Curt Swan, who at the time was drawing the SUPERMAN featurette in ACTION COMICS WEEKLY. I was so excited to be sitting next to him that I almost forgot why we had all gathered there, but Mighty Mike soon brought me back to earth. Also seated at our large round table were Jerry Ordway, writer/artist on THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, Roger Stern, the writer on Curt's strip as well as the SUPERMAN flagship title, Roger's always effervescent wife Carmela Merlo, and current SUPERMAN artist Kerry Gammill. We were the Super-Team, called in to carry the ball that John Byrne had passed to us. Our mission: to continue the thrill-packed tradition started 50 years ago by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, to start off Superman's second half-century with a bang.

I was scared to death.

Admittedly, I was still not too familiar with the current version of Superman as revamped by John, Jerry, and Marv Wolfman. After Mike began sending me all the back issues of the three Superman titles, including all the annuals, mini-series, upcoming issues, outlines, etc., I was beginning to think that maybe I had gotten in over my head. What could I contribute to the Superman books that would have a fresh twist? What did I have to offer?

The first order of business was for Jerry, Mike, and Roger to give a synoptic overview of the current Superman storyline and determine where my debut on the character would fit in the most logically. The next was for me to proffer my ideas for the Man of Steel and, more important to me, to determine how my Superman book would be different from either Jerry's or Roger's. This was something I had given a lot of thought to during the previous weeks. I didn't want just another Superman title, undistinguishable from the others. None of us wanted that. If we were to have three

Superman books, we had to find three different ways of interpreting Superman and still maintain the character's consistency despite the individual stylistic approach of each creator. After all, Superman was bigger than any one of us. We all had to be team players.

I had to find some hook, some facet of the new Superman myth that hadn't been completely explored yet. I wanted to delve into a different aspect of Superman's personality that would be exclusive to my title but that would influence and be influenced by the happenings in the other SUPERMAN titles.



Then it hit me. It was so clear, so obvious. Superman ALREADY had three distinct personalities—for years! In fact, as kids we were all reminded of that fact during the opening narration of every episode of the classic THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN TV series:

- ... strange visitor from another planet who came to earth ...
- ... mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper ...
- ... Truth, Justice, and the American Way!

The dawn came. Roger was already handling Superman as the champion super-hero, the fighter for truth, justice, and the American Way in the flagship title. Jerry's preferences seem to center more around on Supes' more human side, on Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter, and his circle of friends, very reminiscent of the TV series. So, for my new, still unnamed Superman book, I staked my claim on Kal-El, Superman's Kryptonian heritage, the strange visitor from another planet.

Believe it or not, the person who crystallized the idea for me was—are you ready for this?—BOB HOPE!

The others at the restaurant table looked at me strangely, too. I explained I remembered how surprised I was to learn that Bob Hope, the embodiment of Americanism, was actually born in London, England! It also amazed me that so few people even knew that. It occurred to me that Supes is so intrinsically terran, so characteristically American, that most of the people in his books would tend to forget, if they had ever known at all, that he wasn't "one of us." It was the alienness of Superman that I wanted to explore—what it's like to be the last son of Krypton, of knowing that his race, his heritage and history, will all die when he does—unless he does something about it. John Byrne's re-interpretation of the Krypton history had been my favorite part of the new Superman. It made sense to me. I'd found my hook.

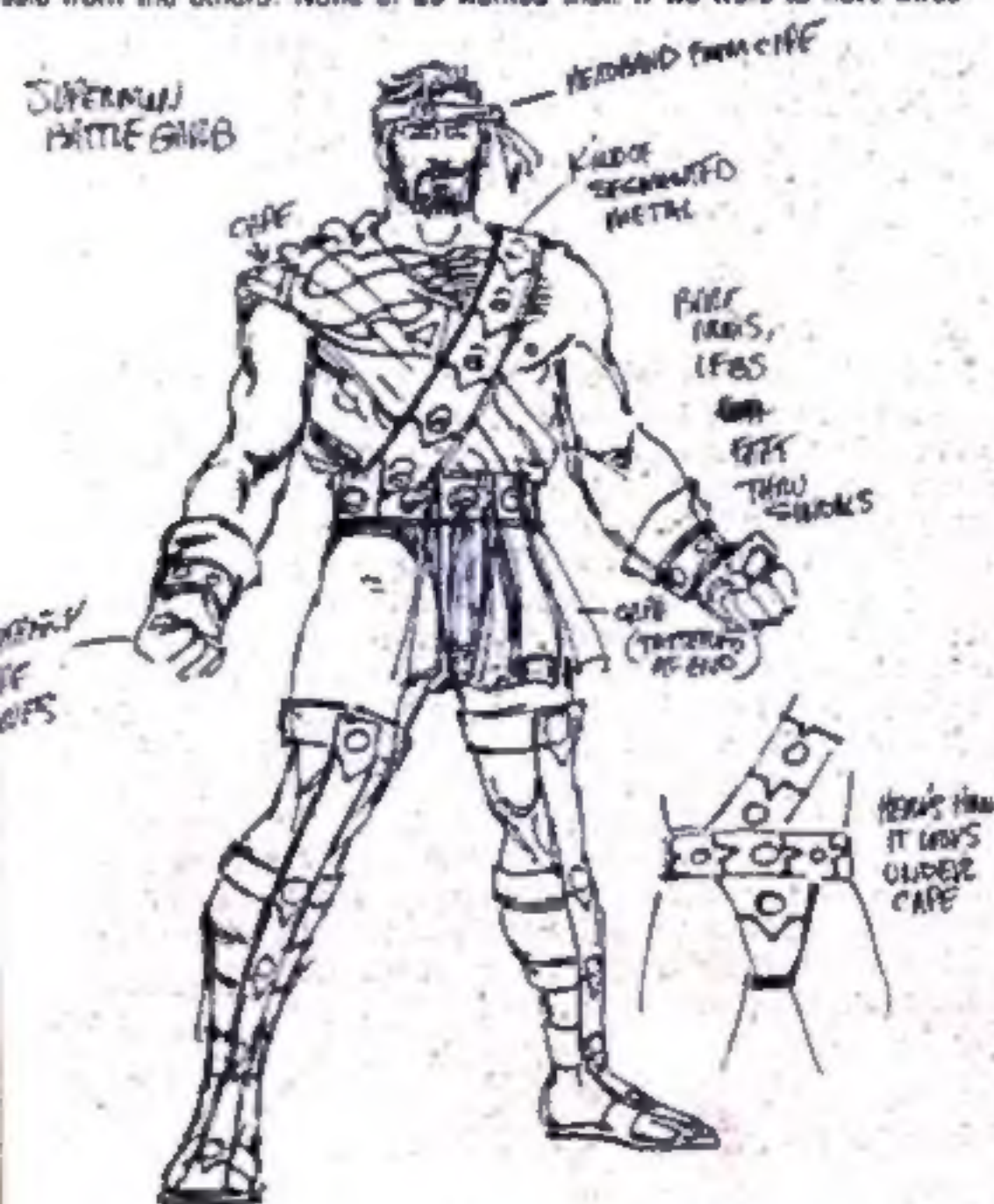
Now, if only I could sell that hook to the others.

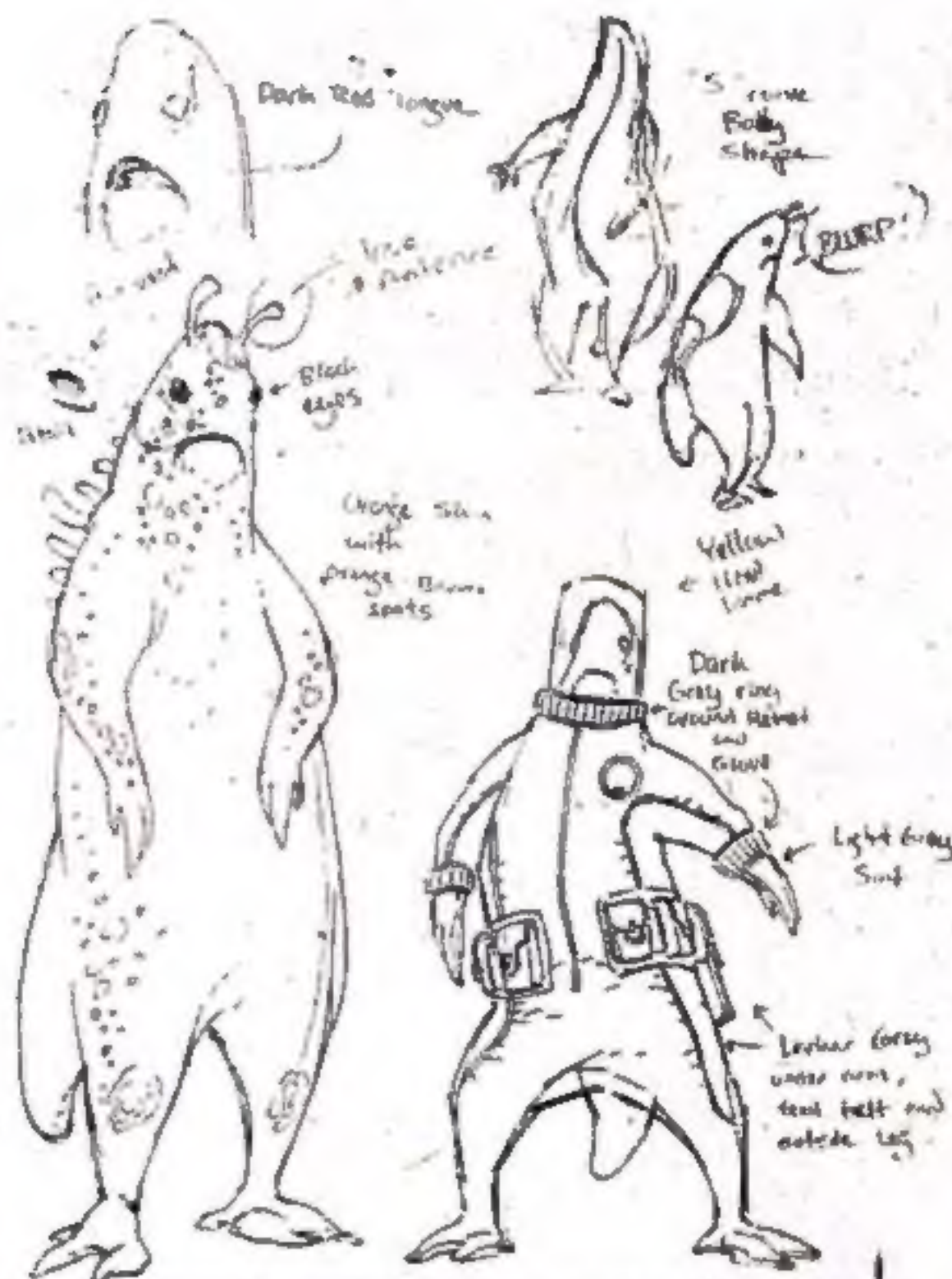
It was easier than I thought. Ideas started flying around faster than speeding bullets. Everyone had something interesting to contribute, including Curt, who informed us that in all the decades he was drawing Superman, this was the first time he had ever been asked to participate in the plotting. He seemed so excited about it.

We began expanding on the initial premise, discarding what didn't work, changing a scene here, a character there, finding the best road to take to arrive at the most dynamic conclusion possible. We suggested ideas for each other's books, trying to make it all fit together in one coherent Superman mythos. We had gone in with pickaxes of imagination, mining for a storyline, and we'd struck the mother lode.

And more important, we were a team.

Now, we still had one hurdle to jump. Something was still missing. So





much of what we discussed that night was to be set up during the months before my first issue, it seemed a shame that I wasn't physically involved in it. Jerry and Roger were already altering the structure of the "Superman in Exile" plotline to set up the "Son of Krypton" angle. Through the sacrifices and talents of my Super-Teammates, my Superman series was benefiting from a great build-up. Yet, my arrival on the new series was still a full year away.

That's when Mighty Mike suggested doing a special Superman annual, a special, large story which would act as the turning point for Superman and be co-written by the three new SUPERMAN writers, to launch the new era, as it were.

I must confess that Mike's idea caused me a bit of concern. With all the ballyhoo over my arrival on the new series, wouldn't my involvement blunt the impact of that first issue? Mike thought long and hard about that but concluded that the special uniqueness of the project was worth the gamble. It was already obvious that I would deal with the chapter relating Krypton's history, and I requested that Mike Mignola, who had done such a marvelous job illustrating the WORLD OF KRYPTON mini-series, be its artist. To me he was the obvious choice. Mike Carlin said that he would check on that.

So the main business was done, as well as the main course, and it was time to relieve our harried waitress and head back to our hotel. We were all excited. We accomplished a lot that night, but there was still so much more to do. The Super-Summer had only begun.

We had a follow-up meeting a couple of months later in New York. Joining Jerry, Mike, Roger, and me this time was inker Dennis Janke, who injected a few suggestions but seemed content to just sit back and listen to us crazy writers bandy more ideas around. Some folk are just suckers for punishment. We came up with the basic framework of what would turn out to be the second ACTION COMICS ANNUAL, and all that was left was to figure out who would handle what. That wasn't as easy as it sounded. We'd gotten a little carried away with the story. So intertwined were our individual storylines that dividing the book into consecutive chapters was impossible.

So, guess which crazy writer volunteered to type out the basic plot outline? I took the job only because everyone felt I had the best memory. (Marv Wolfman and I had long ago abandoned written plots when I worked on THE NEW TEEN TITANS; I drew the book from my recollections of our plot discussions.) I learned why soldiers often recommended that one never volunteer for anything. It ended up being quite an undertaking. Not only did the story have to be paced logically, but each page had to be designated for a particular writer and/or artist, with no team being too unduly burdened with the bulk of the work.

Despite the difficulties, I found it exhilarating. Maybe it was because the story was finally more than just an intangible concept, that it was actually real. Maybe it was because of the faith my fellow teammates placed in me. Maybe it was because it was Superman. Visions of Kirk Alyn, George Reeves and Christopher Reeve flew through my mind as my fingers raced

across word processor keys. I could hear Bud Collyer's voice from the 1940's Max Fleischer cartoons. The Superman theme played in my head with all its brassy boldness. I was doing it! I was actually writing Superman!

After a week, the outline was ready to go. To my relief, Mike accepted it. Roger and Jerry took their pages and fleshed out their portions of the plot. My pages were already set for the penciler which, to my greatest pleasure, ended up being Mike Mignola after all—and I was going to ink him! With Jerry penciling his own chapter with inks by John Statema, and Roger's portion to be illustrated by Curt Swan and Brett Breeding, this Annual was going to be something really special. Brett, by this time, had already started his stint as my co-artist on my new Superman series, which, ironically, ended up being the oldest of the three titles. After months of trying to come up with a name for the new Superman book, I wound up with ACTION COMICS, which had reverted to being a Superman showcase title. Everything old is new again.

This Annual provided me with another bonus. Jerry wanted to ink over my pencils for the cover. Now, I haven't had anyone else ink my covers in four years, but there was no way I could turn down an offer to be inked by Jerry Ordway again. It was the icing on the cake.



But just when you think everything's settled, fate steps in to shake things up again. Months after that initial meeting in Cleveland that Super-Summer, after all the preparations, after all the planning, hardly anyone is working on the same books they were then. Jerry now writes and (eventually) draws the flagship title SUPERMAN, while I've taken over his writing duties on THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN with Dan Jurgens and Art Thibert ably handling the illustrations. Roger Stern in turn will now be scripting over my layouts on ACTION COMICS as Brett Breeding remains as my co-artist. Brett and I on ACTION are the only holdovers from the original plans.

But, you know, I think it's just going to add to the excitement. Jerry should be doing the lead title. He deserves it. And man, I'd been wanting to work with Roger since our days together at Marvel. I've admired Dan's work the last few years and he's done some crackjack Superman stories of his own. Yeah, I think this all worked out pretty darn well. And, knowing Mike Carlin, I wouldn't be surprised to see an occasional story by the likes of Kerry Gammill, Curt Swan, Keith Giffen and anyone else Mike can round up. This Superman team just keeps getting bigger and bigger.

And it sure feels good to be a part of it.

end

SKETCHES BY ORDWAY & MIGNOLA

BEASTCHARMING

Perennially purveying a plenitude of purty, prettified pictures to my peerless pals!

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